

NEW WHEELS IN OLD
RUTS A PILGRIMAGE
TO CANTERBURY VIA
THE ANCIENT PILGRIMS'
WAY



ILLUSTRATED BY
F. W. R. ADAMS

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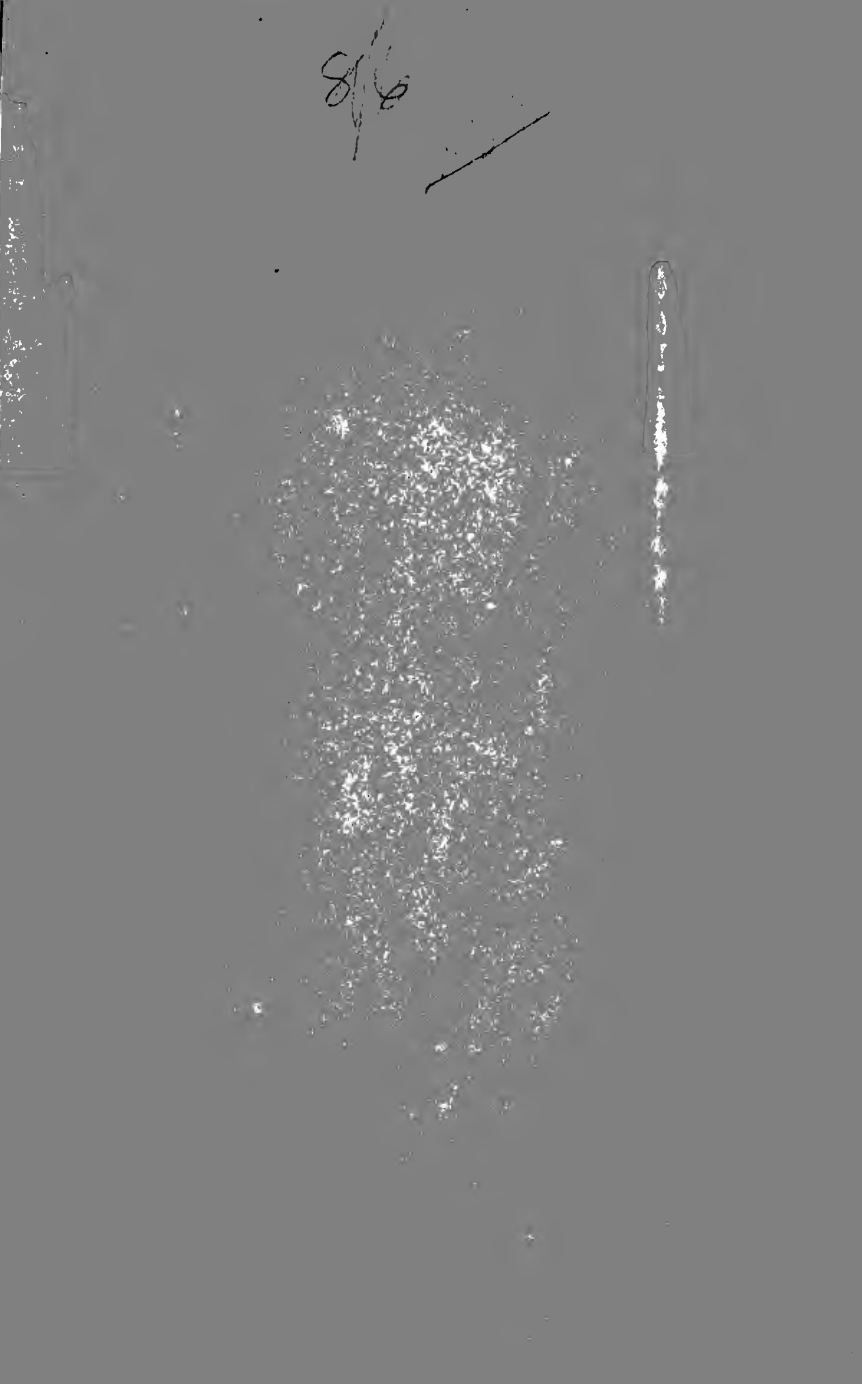
BY HENRY PARR

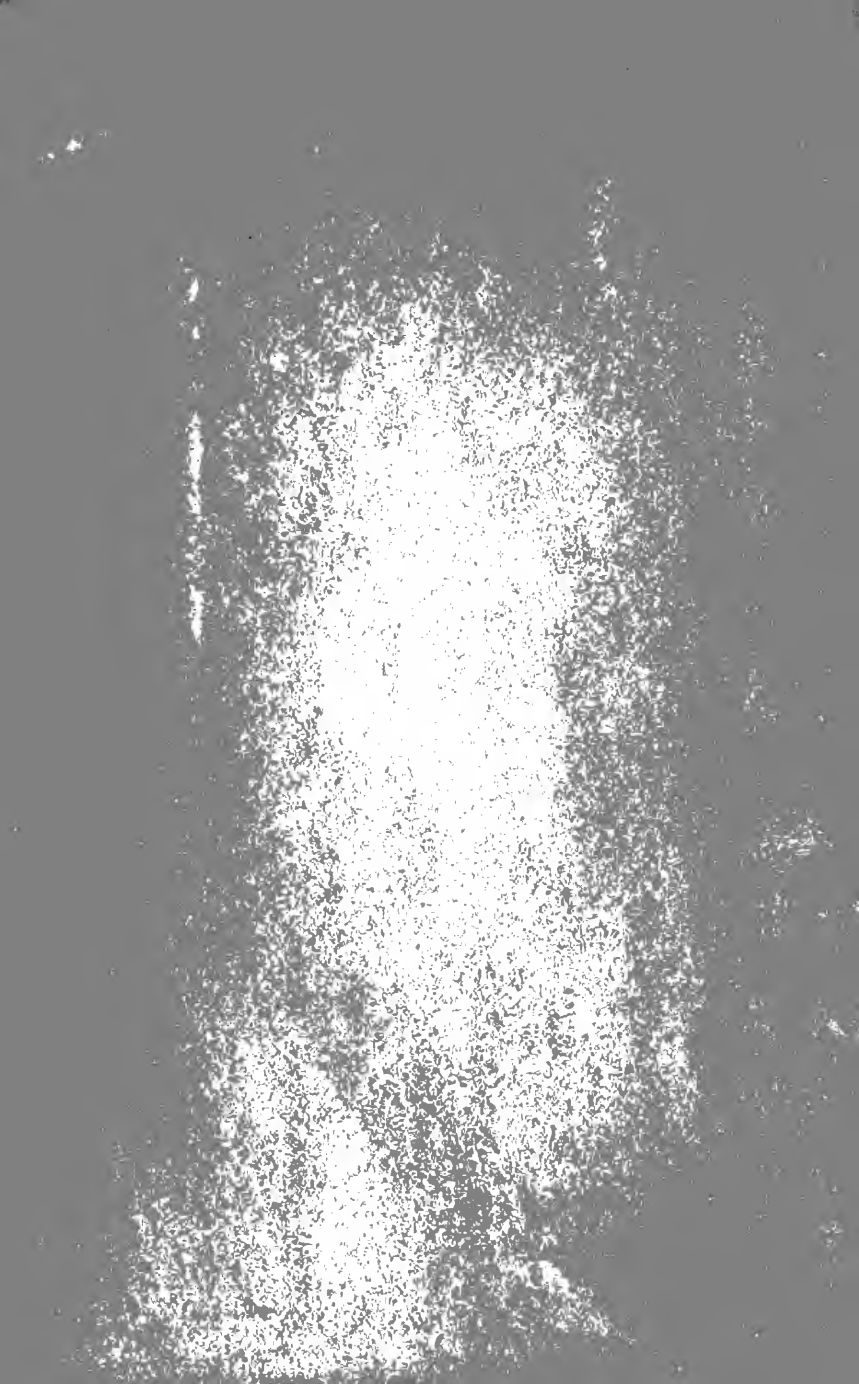


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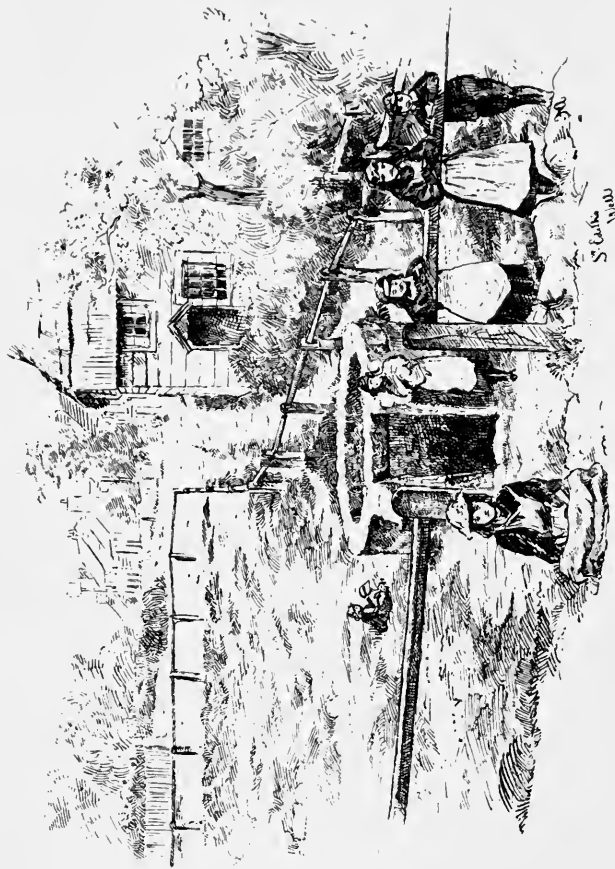
NEW WHEELS



IN OLD RUTS



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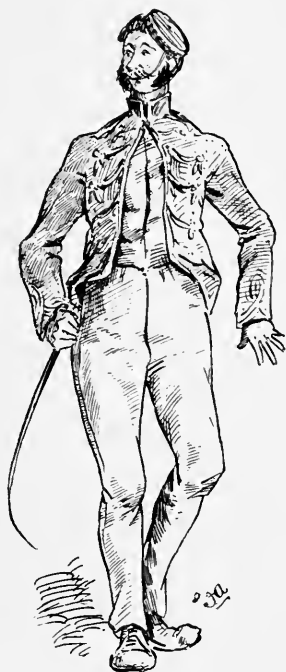


ST. EDITH'S WELL, KENSING.

[From a Photograph by Mr. J. W. Church.]

NEW WHEELS IN OLD RUTS

A PILGRIMAGE TO CANTERBURY
VIA THE ANCIENT PILGRIM'S WAY
BY HENRY PARR WITH PEN AND INK
SKETCHES BY F. W. R. ADAMS



LONDON : T. FISHER UNWIN
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PREFACE.

IN case anybody doesn't like this book, I may as well explain that I intended to have written something very different. The work was to have teemed with profound archæological research and solid learning. But I got into bad company and was led astray. The little frailties of my fellow pilgrims proved more attractive matter for my purpose than more serious subjects. After all, neither Chaucer nor Erasmus were quite able to resist the same temptation.

My chief regret, however, is that the photographs taken *en route* by my friend, Mr. J. W. Church, have had to be omitted from this edition. Not only are they of exceptional technical excellence, but both author and artist had relied upon them to supply the defects of pen and pencil with regard to the scenery in the valleys of the Medway and Stour.



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PROLOGUE

BY AN OBSERVANT OUTSIDER.

A NEW idea always has a deleterious effect on the Reviewer. It is so unnecessary, so contrary to the etiquette of his profession, for a journalist to have any ideas of his own. His mission in life is to criticise, and belittle by plagiarism all the new ideas of other people, so that they may see the folly of their eccentric attempts at originality, and form a firm purpose of amendment in the future.

To do the Reviewer justice, he tries conscientiously to deal with his own ideas in the same manner as with those of other people. Somehow or other the treatment is never very successful. The more carefully he pulls his ideas to pieces, dissects and criticises, the more important and all-engrossing they appear. They refuse to be crushed or set aside. The only certain cure, so he has informed me confidentially, is a week's holiday and a bracing atmosphere.

It was just about the time when the apparition of a watering-cart in Fleet Street betokened that summer

sun's ought to have commenced to glow. The Reviewer was observed to wear a worried look, and to mistake the mustard pot for the milk-jug three evenings in succession. Then we knew that an idea was beginning to trouble him.

A week later the symptoms became much more pronounced. The tea-table every evening was



entirely covered with railway time-tables, guide-books and county atlases surreptitiously borrowed from the reading-room a few doors off. So engrossed was he in the study of these works that he frequently left without settling with the cashier, thus entailing considerable outlay on the part of casual acquaintances.

With a sad pity we watched the malady reach an infectious stage.

The new victim was Higgins. This was no more than might be expected. Higgins, in the rare intervals during which he is not evolving some wild craze of his own, is an invaluable ally, when any new scheme for the regeneration of mankind, or the replenishment of the private purse, has occurred to



you. He co-operates enthusiastically, and is easily persuaded to undertake any part of the work which is either difficult or disagreeable. If it happens to prove a success, then you can secure all the credit for yourself ; if the whole affair is a failure, of course you blame "That fool Higgins!"

At length on Wednesday evening at the club, our curiosity was appeased, by the Reviewer solemnly

announcing that in company with a select party of pilgrims he intended to explore the Pilgrim's Way.

We had heard of the Appian Way, and also of the Milky Way. It appeared that the thoroughfare in question was not connected with either of these. For our further information Higgins read us the following extract from "Murray's Guide":

┌ "A line of ancient road, perhaps British, is in many parts of its course known as 'The Pilgrim's Way,' and is traditionally said to be that followed by the pilgrims to Canterbury. . . . Traces of it are found throughout Kent, Surrey, or Hampshire, marked often by long lines of Kentish yews, usually creeping half way up the hills, immediately below the line of cultivation, and under the highest crest, passing here and there a solitary chapel or friendly monastery, but avoiding for the most part the towns and villages and the regular roads, probably for the same reason as, in the days of Shamgar, the son of Anath, 'the high-ways were unoccupied and the travellers walked through bye-ways.'"

This was the Reviewer's idea. Nowadays, as he explained, it is difficult to hit on any kind of excursion that has not been anticipated by somebody else. If you think of going round the world in a few minutes shorter time than the record, at every junction you will meet some other fool on the same bent. If you go shooting "big game," ten to one your neighbour Jones bags the very tiger you have

selected on which to display your prowess. The libraries are full of books written by tourists in the wilds of Guatemala, Central Africa, Cape Horn, and everywhere else of difficult access, and that costs a small fortune to travel in with any degree of safety and comfort. There is just this one route, near home



and left deserted. No one has thought of writing a book about the lovely scenery in the Weald of Kent, or the quaint architecture and prehistoric remains that line this curious, long-forgotten track.

When the subject was first broached to the Photographer, he said that his finances were not prepared to stand the strain.

"It will cost you next to nothing," the Reviewer assured him. "Besides, if you want a pound or two you can always come to me."

The Reviewer always labours under the impression that he is possessed of untold millions. In reality, he is invariably impecunious.



"Well, who else is coming?" continued the Photographer.

"Oh! the Artist. He will do most of the illustrating work. You can make one or two telling pictures for the Exhibition. We can take it easy. Ten miles a day will be ample. Johnson is coming too, and (*sotto voce*) we can make him carry the camera."

"I'll think about it," said the Photographer at last. And when the Photographer deliberates he is lost.

The Artist's sympathy had next to be enlisted. He is an active, enterprising young man, with a lengthy stride. To him the Reviewer pictured the delights of thirty miles a day.

"You need do very little sketching. Only take

notes of some curious bits of local character and rustic humour. You can 'fake up' most of your sketches from the photographs."

Johnson refused to come on any account. He said Kent was a most dangerous country for a walking tour, infested with tramps and hop-pickers. In vain did Higgins assure him that hops were not harvested in the first week of August. Johnson was inexorable. Ilfracombe with the wife and children was quite epoch-making enough for him.

The Boy was more easily persuaded. I believe his infant mind was chiefly attracted by the opportunities which were sure to occur for the sundry games of whist and dominoes, in which his soul delighted. He was tolerated by the expedition, partly because numbers made the pilgrimage most imposing, partly, as Higgins remarked, because it would be doing him an immense amount of good to spend a few days in the company of sober, well-conducted persons.



Nothing could be more complete than the arrangements. Almost daily the Reviewer discovered a more authentic route involving a complete change in the programme. Owners of property were written to for permission to pass through their territory, and a courteous letter conferring *carte blanche* was almost invariably received. Innkeepers were instructed to reserve unlimited accommodation. Higgins, who was appointed Master of the Forage Department, compiled an elaborate *menu* for each day. Over this the Reviewer chuckled inwardly. He was better acquainted than the rest of the party with the resources of Kentish taverns.

With this introduction I will leave to him the task of recounting the adventures which befell the pilgrims in their wanderings.

CHAPTER I.

A COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS.

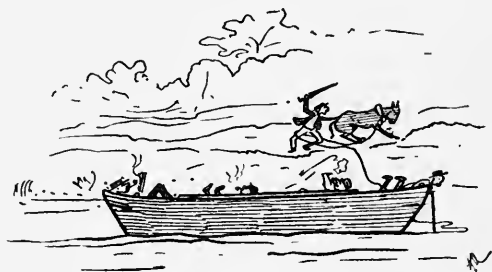
THE pleasures of a walking tour are in exactly inverse ratio to the weight of luggage.



Here Higgins interposed with an amendment

"Why a walking tour? Mules would be so much more correct!" The idea of a pilgrimage on mules opened out whole vistas of possible enjoyment, and we deputed Higgins to make inquiries all about mules and the terms on which they could be hired. A mutual friend asserts that he met him next day at a riding school in Knightsbridge.

At the next meeting Higgins appeared with his arm in a sling. He alleged that he had slipped on a



piece of orange peel, and submitted that the proper kind of mules for pilgrimage purposes could only be obtained from abroad at very great expense. As a substitute he proposed bicycles. There were ingenious means of fixing cameras on to bicycles. Then the Artist said that he saw no reason at all why Higgins should not ride a bicycle, because it would afford us so much entertainment on the journey. But the Pilgrim's road was not an ideal bicycle track in his opinion. There was too much variation of level, and the ruts and stones had a habit of concealing themselves behind tufts of grass, that tended

to disturb the serenity and repose of an ideal pilgrimage on bicycles.

The Boy knew exactly where we could hire a mule, and a barge to tie on to it as well. We might take turns to go on shore and hurry the mule along, while the rest basked in the sun and smoked, or spun nautical yarns. When it rained we could go down into the cabin and play "nap" or dominoes. The hold would make a capital stable for the mule, so there would be no hotel bills to pay.

When we informed the Boy that canals did not always run within convenient distance of the Pilgrim's Way, he saw no difficulty. "We could easily trade off the barge for a caravan or a waggonette when the canals are not handy. Then when we got to another canal we could trade back the waggonette for the barge again. The mule would come in useful for either work."

This would never do. Elaborate commercial transactions are contrary to the pilgrim spirit. And think how unsettling it would be, say, to the Photographer on his return from a visit to some ancient ruin, to find that during his absence headquarters had been transferred from a barge to a Pickford's van!

And there is another personage whose feelings must be considered. I mean the mule. Sudden changes of rank are demoralising to man and beast alike. Suppose the exigencies of the moment required our exchange of the barge for a hansom cab, or a stylish dogcart. Just as our mule had succeeded in

acquiring a high-stepping trot with becoming arrogance, we should perhaps strike another canal, and he would be shunted back to the monotonous old barge again. His intellect would be hopelessly undermined. I refused to be a party to any proceeding of this character.

The practical common sense of the Photographer came to the rescue with a much better plan. "Why not take the train to some place, leave our traps at



the station, see and sketch that part of the route, and then return and take the train to the next station?"

We spent three days figuring out this method with the help of Bradshaw and the County Maps. If the stations had only been placed a little nearer the localities we wished to visit, and there were a few more trains, it would have been more feasible. Under existing circumstances our journey would occupy three months, and we should have to walk a distance of 1,063 miles to save sixty!

The Photographer did not like to abandon this plan entirely. Could we not do as much as possible during the holiday, and then take Saturday to Monday off each week till it was finished? Or we might parcel it out into five sections and each undertake one, after the manner of a "Chain." But neither of these motions found a seconder.

I exhorted the pilgrims with some lines from Conington's Virgil :

" Since Fate constrains let us obey,
And follow where she leads the way,"

which I had just found in a Dictionary of Quotations. We were fated to walk, and I proposed that each one of us should forthwith write down an inventory of the luggage absolutely necessary for a walking tour of a week's duration.

The Artist finished his list first. I think it so admirable that I give it in full :

" Three paper collars."

He explained that the collars being reversible each one would last for two days, and the cleanest of the three would be selected to serve again for the odd day. We struck a balance between this list and that of Higgins, which reached to a total of 112 articles at the point when the available supply of paper gave out. Then I went out and borrowed a bag that seemed to me exactly of the cubical capacity to hold five sets of toilet necessities.

When I brought the bag to Higgins' rooms on the eve of our departure, he was much amused. He said that an uncle of his was in the habit of packing five dress suits, three pairs of boots and seventeen linen shirts, with accessories to match, in a bag of just the



same size and description. I remonstrated with Higgins for his effrontery in owning a relation who wallowed in this deplorable luxury. Without taking due notice of this timely reproof, he continued to urge that it was wasting our opportunities to put just our few simple possessions in a fine commodious bag such as that was. We might at least take the seven guide-books, two

or three novels, and a packet of inflammatory literature that he had promised to distribute among the labourers, to oblige a friend who believed in that sort of thing.

I adjured Higgins to spare the feelings of the bag. He replied that it would stretch.

He was quite right. The bag stretched wonderfully. Next day just as we were ascending an

omnibus it stretched so much that the lock burst, and the populace in Holborn scrambled for a phenomenal shower of toothbrushes and paper collars.

CHAPTER II.

UNDER WEIGH.

OF course we were late in starting, the delay having been caused by Higgins who would insist on changing his necktie. Higgins has an elaborate sequence of colours in the matter of neckties. On great feast-days, such as birthdays, he wears green with yellow spots ; on Sundays, plain red ; on other days, white silk alternating with blue or neutral tints. He had purchased a most gorgeous tie, light blue with orange stripes, on purpose for this occasion, but at the very last moment he relented and insisted on arraying himself in plain red.

When we arrived breathless and anxious at Holborn Station (and the Boy had been rescued from an attempt to vault the barrier into a Crystal Palace train) it was discovered that to allow for accidents I had timed the departure of the train twenty minutes too early. Higgins was especially indignant, as he had fresh misgivings about his tie and wanted to go back and change it. When diverted from this object he consoled himself by purchasing at the bookstall a

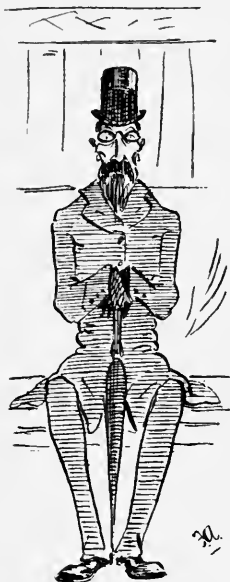
complete set of various penny periodicals, guaranteeing untold wealth to any reader who was fortunate enough to get killed in a railway accident.

Higgins is always so thoughtful and provident. Another little ingenious device of his was to cut up the Ordnance map into small squares so that we could take one section at a time without the inconvenience of opening out and doubling up a great sheet. Each square was numbered on the back so as to prevent mistakes. The worst of it is that all Higgins' schemes have some insidious unforeseen defect about them. No accident occurred during our railway journey, so that the money spent on *Tit-Bits* and *Cassell's Saturday* was completely thrown away. As to the cut-up Ordnance map—more anon.

The railway journey was somewhat disappointing. I can remember the time when even the hour or two spent between Charing Cross and Lewisham *via* Cannon Street was full of amusement and instruction to the traveller. The engine driver used to select such interesting spots for his stoppages. Thus I have often had the opportunity of studying the internal economy of a large timber-yard; or if there was a fight between two dogs, or an argument between a man and his wife in a Borough attic, the train always considerably drew up so that the passengers might have an opportunity of betting on the result. Nowadays all this sort of thing is but a memory. You are whirled along remorselessly at thirty or forty miles an hour past the most lovely scenery or most

curious episodes of modern life. Just think of the chances wasted on that long viaduct from Blackfriars to Herne Hill. Those miles of windows, on the contents of which you have no time even to speculate, and are perforce thrust upon your own resources or

those of your fellow-travellers.



The Boy suggested that this was just the proper occasion for a game of whist. Both the Artist and myself declined to join. So from the two strangers in the compartment he selected a solemn but inoffensive-looking individual and invited him to take the fourth hand.

"Sorry not to oblige you, but I have never played a game of cards in my life," replied the solemn man. "But don't mind me!"

This aroused the admiration of the other stranger, a big strapping Borough salesman.

"Gort 'im again," he exclaimed, with a hearty slap on his neighbour's back. "You stick to that, and I'll stand by you."

He then somewhat irrelevantly proceeded to inform us in picturesque and forcible phraseology that he had been charged threepence for a sausage at the refreshment bar.

Thenceforward the coster took his solemn neighbour under his wing. It is a pity that his repeated expressions of amity and esteem were so unprintable. He recounted to him all the secrets of his business, his friendships, his amours and amusements. As these confidences did not succeed in dispelling the solemn man's depression, he offered to sing any song the company selected, and without giving us time for choice, burst into various specimens from his repertory. His voice for volume and capacity would have suited the Albert Hall admirably; for tune and compass it would have suited anywhere not less than two miles from his auditors. Higgins thought our new acquaintance vastly entertaining.

But music was of no avail; the solemn man only looked a little more miserable than before.

The benevolent coster was not discouraged in his attempts to please. He declared that he knew an infallible cure for a disordered liver. There was a cabbage and a saucepan connected with it; the preparation was intricate, and I forget the rest. But it was a sure cure for all diseases of the liver. He would fight any one for a tanner who denied it. The scars on his closely cropped cranium, earned in combats where quart pots are the missiles, testified to his prowess.

"Hafter all, the real thing you wants, mate, is in my bloomin' pocket all the time. Cheer up, sonny, you shall have it. Wot! not tikin' any, old chum!" So saying he produced a bottle, and, after applying it to his lips, proffered it to his neighbour.

At this crisis we summoned up courage to interfere for the protection of our fellow-traveller. The exhibition had such an intensely humorous side that we had not realised the full extent of the victim's disgust and discomfort. The coster was very indignant at our interference, complaining that it entirely arose from our jealousy of his preference for the solemn man's society. A threat to call the guard restrained him from further violence.

The solemn man thanked us for our timely assistance, and said that he was a lecturer on temperance. Higgins remarked that his uncle had once intended to sign the pledge, but changed his mind when he read in an anatomical work that a certain bacillus lived in the alimentary canal, and spent its whole time in converting saccharine matter into alcohol. Upon this he saw that it was hopeless to attempt the elimination of alcohol from the system.

The solemn man replied that some people's bacilli must have been long ago thrown out of work by foreign competition. He left the carriage at the next station.

After his departure the coster volunteered to take a hand at whist. The game would have proceeded more harmoniously if parties had been more agreed about the rules of play, and there had been fewer disputes as to "what was trumps." It ended by Tom Harris offering to fight his three opponents (the existence of partners in the game was one question on which authorities were divided) on this important

subject. We were nearing a station, and just then the coster remembered that the solemn man had only changed into the next carriage. Since we had driven "his friend" out by our unsociable ways, he determined to rejoin him. With the inconsequence of his class, he first insisted on shaking hands all round, and promised to stand us a tripe supper and a pint of stout apiece whenever we chose to "drop in" at his stand in the Borough market.

"The Pilgrim's path has still its dangers," said the Artist, with a sigh of relief, when our noisy acquaintance had evaporated. "Will the Reviewer condescend to cheer our fainting hearts with an appropriate story?"

On this invitation I related the following legend. Many readers will recognise its source, different versions being current in most parts of Spain.

THE MIRACLE OF SAN DOMINGO.

"Dark and gloomy was Felipe's journey. Sunset was long past, and he had lost his way in the trackless forest. His limbs were worn out with weariness; the yells of the wolves filled him with misgivings. As the strange sounds of the night echoed round him, his anxiety increased so much that he forgot even to bless himself.

"'I can go no further,' at length he exclaimed. 'I will climb into this tree for safety and wait till morning.'

“Scarcely had he reached his place of refuge when he heard the angry voices of two men in dispute approaching. Two mendicant friars were quarrelling over the result of their day’s begging.

“‘I worked harder than you,’ cried the first, ‘and have earned at least three times as much.’

“‘You are a liar!’ the other retorted. ‘You had all the rich men’s houses for your share, while I had to beg from the poor and at the church doors. Share and share alike I say!’

“And so they continued to argue till from words they came to blows. Nor did they stop at this, but took up sticks and stones and attacked each other so furiously that they bled to death.

“Felipe watched them till his heart grew sick with horror, and his limbs trembled so much that he nearly fell out of the tree. When at last they sank exhausted he descended and found they were dead. Now Felipe was a pious pilgrim, and omitted no religious duties. So, after saying so much of the office of the dead as he could remember, he dug a grave for each. But when he came to inter them, the bodies had vanished!

“Soon he was compelled to return to his tree by the herds of hungry wolves, who snapped and tore at the bark in the vain attempt to reach him. In spite of this, weariness eventually induced slumber.

“He was awakened by the sound of more people in conversation beneath the tree. A band of robbers were discussing the disposal of their booty. Felipe

thought he would give them a lesson. Suddenly, in the midst of their excited wrangling he shouted, as solemnly as he could, 'Thou shalt not steal!' At this the robbers took to their heels, conscience stricken.

"Next morning he examined the booty left behind by the marauders. It was nearly all gold and silver plate, precious stones, and money. So he buried all in the graves intended for the two friars, and went on his way towards the shrine of St. James of Compostella.

"Alas! a sad fate was in store for him. At the next inn the landlady took a fancy to Felipe, he being young and comely. He was a pious young man and repelled her advances. In revenge she concealed a silver spoon in his wallet, and after he had gone, pretended to miss it, and sent the police in search of the pilgrim.

"The constable warned him that whatever he said might be taken down in evidence against him; but Felipe, relying on his innocence, blurted out the whole story about the robbers and the buried treasure in the wood.

"'Oh, indeed!' exclaimed the judge, when this was related to him. 'This is surely the most impudent rogue that ever stole. We have caught at last the hardened villain who robbed the duke's palace a few days ago.' And he bade the officers take him to the place where the treasure was concealed, and hang him there as a warning to all future offenders.

"Months passed away, and Felipe's parents became anxious at the continued absence of their only son. They started in search of him. In due time they came suddenly on the very place where his body hung, in chains, like a felon. Then to their grief-stricken hearts came the voice of consolation. The dead lifted its voice and spake—

" 'I am not guilty, dear father and mother. And, through the intercession of blessed St. Dominick, I am happy in the pleasures of Paradise.'

"The parents hurried off to do justice to the memory of their beloved son. In their eagerness they burst into the magistrate's dining-room just as he was about to carve a fine pair of roast fowls.

"The judge heard what the old people had to say, and then he laughed long and loud.

" 'You might as well tell me,' he sneered, 'that these chickens will get up and crow! Goodness gracious!'

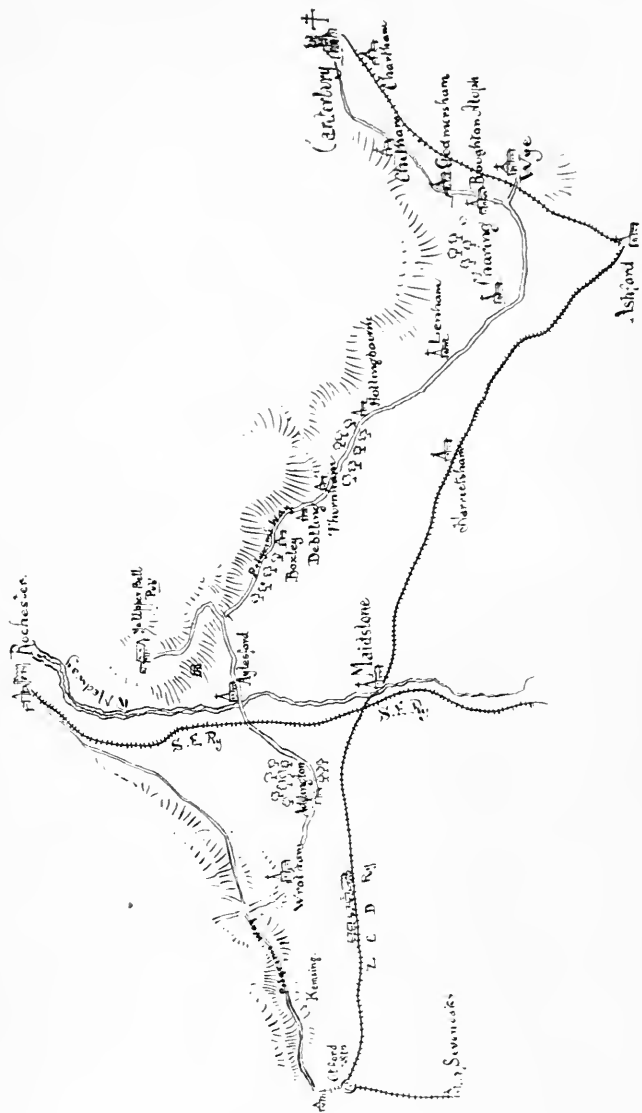
"The chickens had risen to the occasion; one of them jumped out of the dish on to the floor, and the grease entirely ruined the new carpet. The other flapped his featherless wings sending showers of gravy into the bystanders' eyes, and, perched on the back of the chair, gave forth the most defiant crow that ever was heard in a barnyard.

"The magistrate had no roast fowl for dinner that day, for these phenomenal roosters were claimed by the ecclesiastical authorities. According to Mrs. Middlemore, two of their descendants are still pre

served alive near the High Altar in the church of St. Domingo de la Calzada. And this is the reason why pilgrims to the Shrine of St. James of Compostella still wear white feathers in their hats."



The Boy's commentary on this story was that everybody except the poultry seemed to come out second best. At any rate our own policy should be to avoid collisions with the law.



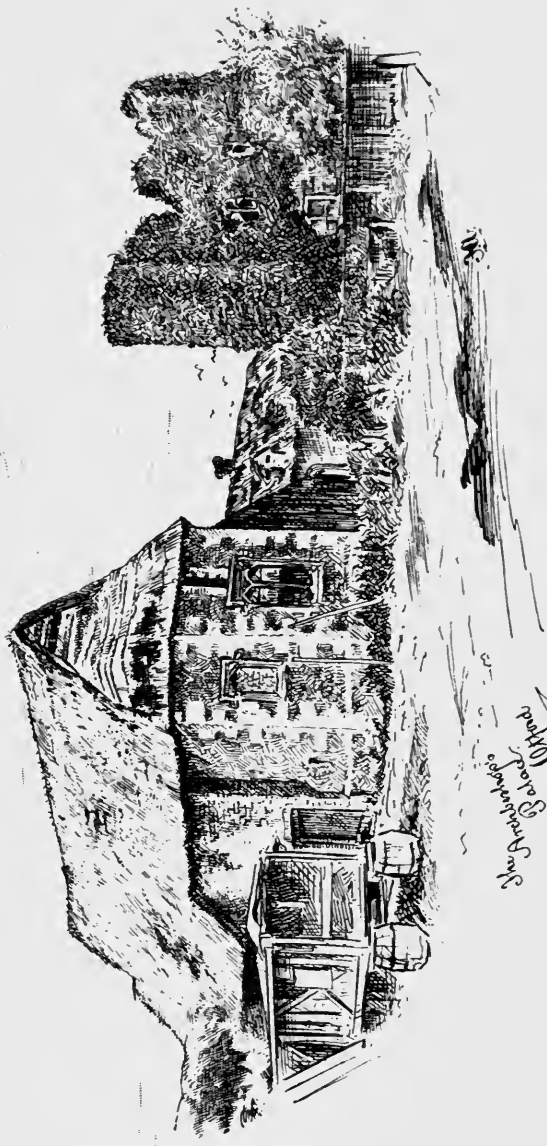
CHAPTER III.

OTFORD.

“GOOD morning!”

The kindly greeting from a passing peasant in the lane which led from the station to the town of Otford, struck a responding chord in hearts jaded with the conventionalities of city life. This little mark of human sympathy cheered us almost as much as the pure and soft breezes, that we drew in at each expanding respiration. It was just a word of welcome, like the little bird's salutation to the prince who came to waken the Sleeping Beauty from her hundred years' sleep; for was it not our mission to revive the Pilgrim's road from its slumber of three hundred years?

According to one John Philpot, who wrote a history of Kent in 1659, the derivation of Otford is—"The place where the otters breed." The Boy declared that the derivation was an "otter fraud." To curb any future offences of this kind he was condemned to carry the camera, our heaviest piece of baggage, for the next two miles.



St. Andrew's
College
New York

There are ruins of a former palace of the Archbishop of Canterbury, an ivy-grown, red brick, Tudor tower, a broken cloister turned into cottages, and an octagon foreshortened and covered with a great roof of thatch which had a charmingly quaint effect. A path past the church with its curious Jacobean oak porch, and through a hop garden where the luxuriant bine was already rich with promising buds, led us to St. Thomas' Well. Braving the remonstrances of an interloper who declared

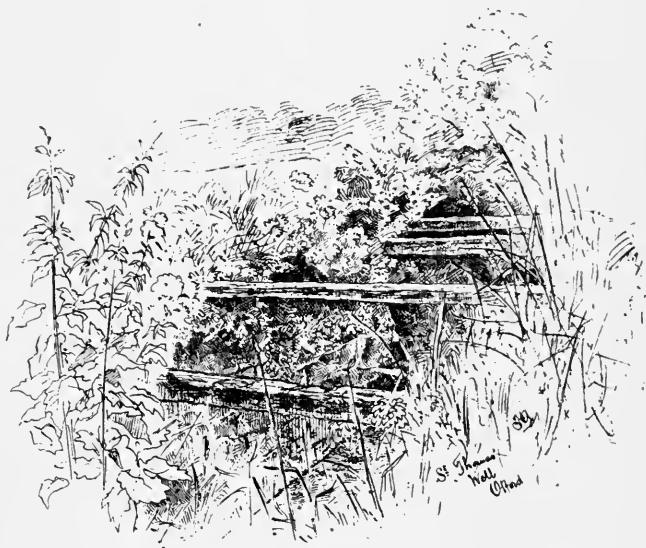
that we were trespassing, we descended the steps and drank of the limpid refreshing fountain. The spring is in a little "dip" in the ground, and forms a pit about thirty feet by twelve, built up with masonry, with steps leading down to



the water at one angle. Timber struts have been thrown across to prevent the walls falling in. Overgrown with brambles, ivy, and wild flowers of all kinds, this retired nook is a very pleasant spot.

Lambard and others state that the palace being in want of water, the Saint bored in the ground with his staff, and immediately a plentiful supply of water appeared. The legend has this in common with that recorded of Cæsar's Well, where the Ravensborne

rises. We can easily believe that the water burst forth when the staff was thrust in. What we want to know is, how could there ever have been any scarcity of water in a district intersected with small streams, and with the river "where the otters bred," flowing within a stone's throw.



The Boy declined to drink the water, alleging as his excuse the tradition that the Saint used it as a bathing-place. But did St. Thomas ever bathe? Monkish chronicles seem to deny the soft impeachment. Higgins proposed that we should bathe in it, but the fear that the proprietor had departed in search of myrmidons to assist in ejecting us, decided us against the project.

Our way now led us along a by-road between fields of waving corn, arousing our doubts whether agriculture is, after all, in so dreadful a state of depression as some people tell us. Nor could we realise easily that on this peaceful scene had oft-times burst the din and tragedy of war. For here is the eastern end of Holmsdale, one of the most fertile plains in the world, and the stronghold of the men of Kent.

“The Vale of Holmsdale
Never conquered, never shall.”

Every invading army that has entered this fatal district has been cut to pieces. At least two bloody massacres have been wrought by the native armies in the fields through which we are passing. Offa, king of Mercia, was conquered here by Aldric of Kent, in 773, and Edmund Ironsides repulsed Canute with his hordes of Danes, in 1016. Mercian and Danish skulls are even now disinterred in the new furrows. But the proudest boast of the inhabitants is that William the Norman with all his host, the flower of continental chivalry, was overawed at the sight of their numbers and array. He was forced to confirm their ancient charter, and hence they were known as the “Men of Kent,” as distinguished from their neighbours who lost their privileges as a result of the Battle of Hastings.

In the public school where I underwent the

sufferings of education, there was a certain species of boy into whose system the most elementary principles of knowledge could never be instilled. These great hulking louts of fifteen and upwards adhered closely to the bottom of the lowest forms. They were too heavy to rise according to the principles of scholastic gravitation; the *pons asinorum* would have broken down under their weight. How we used to despise them! Though their lot had its compensations. We, the clever ones, had to rise at an unearthly hour to learn by heart long passages from Æschylus or Horace or the Greek Testament, and spend the vigils of the night in writing Latin and Greek composition. They went to bed with the juniors, and rose just in time for a bathe in the river before breakfast. We were kept poring all day over our verses and logarithms. They ate apples in class, and played noughts and crosses behind the master's back. If we gave a smaller boy a licking for cheeking us, we received long impositions for bullying the lower school. They reduced the small fry into a state of abject slavery, compelling them to obey their slightest whim, and even to give tribute of their pocket money.

There seemed to us some inequality about it all. We consoled ourselves by looking forward and thinking what a small figure these ignoramuses would cut in the world as compared with persons of culture like ourselves. We should do all the great things—be Archbishops, and Prime Ministers, and

Queen's Counsel ; while, with their thick heads and stunted intellects, the future could have no higher task in store for them than hoeing turnips or scrubbing horses.

Alas and alack ! Next time we are sent to school we shall know better.

Time went on. We grew out of our schooldays and were sent out to earn our living. Things were very different to what we expected. Nobody was particularly desirous of seeing Shakespeare translated into Greek, or of buying a Sapphic poem in honour of the opening of the Severn Tunnel. Long years of study had weakened our nerves and destroyed our energy. Our studious and diffident ways were not good armament for the struggle. We all got left somehow.

The most brilliant genius of all is now in an asylum. Another poor fellow jumped off Waterloo Bridge a year or two ago. A third, who can recite from memory nearly the whole of Aristophanes, is a clerk in a solicitor's office at thirty shillings a week.

And how about the dunces who could never understand why, when the subject was in the singular, the verb should not be in the plural ? To them the world was simply an oyster, and they opened it without turning a hair. They had never undermined their constitutions over Greek particles, nor yet enervated their digestive economy with athletic training. They had lived in the sunshine and grown

strong, so that when the real work of life came they were fresh and ready. In subjugating the youngsters they had been learning how to rule the weaker races of men, and impounding their classmates' pocket-money was only a stepping-stone to great financial transactions. To-day they are merchant princes, nitrate kings, and aldermen. One of them is on the County Council and a candidate for Parliament. By writing his speeches at threepence a line I have staved off starvation for a few weeks.

The men of Holmsdale possessed the same inklings of sound worldly wisdom as our backward school-fellows. When messengers came from King Harold asking them to spare a few regiments to fight the Norman invader, they said to each other—"What has it all got to do with us? We are busy with an extra fine harvest, and they want us to leave it to rot in the ground while we go fooling about at Hastings. Not much."

So they sent back to the King: "We are only a humble provincial tribe, and you can easily spare our small assistance. If we send you our fighting men, the Danish pirates will sail up the Medway and ravage our lands. We are doing much more good by stopping at home and preventing this new danger."

Then the Saxon generals laughed, and said with a sneer: "Well, I never did think those Holmsdale people were good for much except tall talk. When the pinch comes, you see, they are a poor lot." And

they went on to Hastings and got badly worsted by the Normans.

Meanwhile, the Holmsdale folk quietly malted their barley, and gathered their wheat into the granaries. A few months later the news came that all the country was submitting to the Conqueror. Then the time for prompt action had arrived.

William of Normandy was sitting in his tent at Swanscombe, near Greenhithe, when word was brought

him that the sentries observed the wood moving towards the camp in a strangely erratic manner. He ascended the look-out, and with his telescope ascertained the truth of the report; his knees



quaked beneath him and his heart grew sick with fear as he thought of Macbeth. "Birnam Wood is coming to Dunsinane for me also. My crimes are finding me out!" he groaned.

The wood advanced till it came within a quarter of a mile of the camp. Then suddenly the Holmsdale men threw down their green branches, and disclosed the serried array of well-armed infantry. And as Archbishop Stigand and his choir of monks struck up the terrible melody of *Novam Victoriam*

Crucem, every Norman knight fished the Bradshaw out of his valise and looked up the next continental express.

However, a compromise was arranged. William generously agreed to sign all the documents without any reference to his solicitors. This is how it came to pass that while all the rest of England was portioned out to Norman favourites, Holmsdale remained Saxon land. And the natives went on prosperously with the proud title of "Men of Kent," and "Saviours of their country," while all the scarred veterans of Stamford Bridge and Senlac had to submit to poverty and disgrace.

Kemsing, our next village, was once a famous place of pilgrimage. St. Edith, whose statue formerly stood in the churchyard, was a sort of *Dea Agrestis*, and protected corn and grain from mildew. Lambard has some remarks, in his own peculiarly boorish kind of wit, on the offerings made at her shrine.

Would that these curious old observances of our forefathers had received more gentle and reverent treatment! Who knows what strange discoveries some painstaking student of folklore might arrive at, if he could only follow out the thread which leads to the Celtic or Teutonic origin of this custom of offering grain to St. Edith, or the analogous practice at Otford of offering a game-cock to St. Bartholomew? They did little harm. They brightened the lives of the peasantry, and cherished a faith which might have grown out of its leading strings with the spread

of education. When the local saint-worship was ruthlessly stamped out and sneered away, the peasant returned to the instincts of his lower nature—witchcraft and devil-worship.

"The question to be considered," remarked Higgins, "is: Did the custom increase the corn crop, or did it not? Before the statue was pulled down and offerings at the shrine forbidden, was it ever satisfactorily proved that the whole thing was a fraud?"

"I cannot tell you," I replied. "I must confess that I never thought of looking at it in that light before."

"Well, I'll tell you a story that illustrates my point," continued Higgins.

"An uncle of mine was superintendent of the telegraph being constructed through Persia. A young Mussulman offered himself for employment, and learnt the Morse alphabet so readily that he was given charge of a temporary station in a remote village.

"The villagers soon became inquisitive as to the nature of his employment. He tried to explain the mysteries of the electric wire. When he told them that he could communicate with the next village within five minutes by tapping on that little box, they laughed at his impudence. He proceeded to state that in ten minutes he could get an answer from Teheran. They opened their mouths in wonder and cried to each other: 'Bismillah! Was there ever

such an incorrigible liar!’ When he talked about sending messages to Constantinople, they broke down. This was disgusting blasphemy. He must go before the Cadi.

“The Cadi said that this was the most barefaced rogue that he had ever come across in the whole course of his judicial experience. He ordered him to be bastinadoed, and afterwards to be tied upon an ass with his face towards the tail, and this inscription on his back: ‘Thus shall be done to all the deceivers of the faithful.’

“Now, we are just in the same position with regard to certain secrets of nature, as the Cadi was with the telegraph. With all our boasted science, Huxley and Darwin don’t know everything.”

“You would have us believe, then, that the discontinuance of the worship of St. Edith has some connection with agricultural depression,” suggested the Artist.

“What facts we hold are in its favour,” replied Higgins. “We know that English agriculture has been steadily getting worse ever since statistics have been properly kept. Who can tell whether or no there is some unsuspected law of nature which connects offering a bushel of corn in a churchyard with bimetallism or whatever else is at the root of the difficulty?”

“Again, the existence of a large demand is generally a testimony to the value of an article. Would sensible, hard-headed people, like the men of Kent,

have gone on paying if it wasn't worth the expense? I say no! And what I say I stick to."

I meant to have left out this bosh of Higgins', but he declares that its absence would damn the book.

A buxom damsel at the village directed us to St. Edith's Well, and stated that its special virtue was to ensure to the wayfarer a speedy desire to return to Kemsing. The water was not tempting and of doubtful purity. The Boy's theory was that it had been recently employed for the village washing. Only threats to immerse him in the viscous fluid restrained him from such atrocities as that "well-water made him unwell," &c., &c. Higgins drank some as a matter of principle, as he always insists on having his money's worth wherever he is. I considered it enough to immerse my little finger in the spring, in honour of St. Edith's finger, which, says the Chronicler, remained pure and undecayed long after her body had crumbled to dust, because she so frequently used the sign of the Cross.

I regard the photograph of St. Edith's Well as our most successful picture. There is an artistic fitness in the scene. Her statue in the church has been thrown down, her feast-day remains unhallowed, her very name is almost forgotten. But still the little green containing the one object that recalls to memory the pious, pure-minded nun is the favourite playground of youth and innocence.

CHAPTER IV.

BY THE WAY.

PASSING through a fruit-garden, where golden gooseberries and rich bunches of red currants hung so near the path that the Boy treated the eighth Commandment as obsolete, we came upon the road which was henceforward to guide us to our destination. It was only a narrow lane, scarce nine feet wide, rapidly degenerating into a mere footpath. Soon the first of the yew-trees was reached, and Higgins enthusiastically gathered sprigs and twined them in his sandy locks. (This is not strictly correct, but it is a more poetical manner of describing the bough depending from the back of his cap as a protection against the flies.)

The expedition had formed itself into an order which we preserved through most of the march through these narrow defiles. First of all strode the Artist, as a kind of advance-guard, pencil and notebook in hand, ready to capture any stray bit of incident or striking example of Kentish character that he might come across. Next, Higgins and

myself, with the bag slung on the former's umbrella, so as to economise the labour of transporting our goods. Then the Boy, manfully trudging along with the camera slung on his back. The rear was composed of the Photographer, armed with the camera tripod and keeping a watchful eye on the Boy's proceedings.

After a mile or two the road became a grassy lane, hedged in on either side with overhanging bushes of



hazel and privet. The sun had already tinted a few early nuts. Brambles and clematis threw out wreaths of sweetly scented blossom from every thicket. Where the hedges were not too dense, the old friend of pilgrims, the Canterbury bell, lifted its dainty blue cups. We were too late for the wild roses—only the long scarlet berries remained. Lower down, the little resinous wood geranium was peeping from the banks amid the wild strawberries and cuckoo pints. Birds we scarcely saw, save for a few wagtails hopping in the newly-mown grass; and once a hawk, poising in its graceful flight to swoop down and beat with

its wings the bush which sheltered some trembling quarry. Of the summer songsters a distant lark alone shared the concert of nature with the humming beetles and the whirring grasshoppers. The drowsy insect droning is but a fit accompaniment to this deserted way. There is something very strange and weird in the feeling with which one follows out this grass-grown track, through a country having a population of four hundred to the square mile, and sees no trace of human life. All through our journey along the whole course of the Pilgrim's Way we never met a soul, except when we made a slight detour to pass through a village or visit some object of interest. It is apparently strictly tabooed by the natives—an uncanny road, reserved for the ghosts of purposes that have been and are no more.

If we want companions on our journey we must conjure them up through the medium of the Artist's pencil. He must recall the ever-passing procession, the gaily caparisoned knight on his black charger, the rich merchant on his pillioned mule, and the ballad-monger, the peasant, and the palmer on foot.

"But why were pilgrimages so universal in the Middle Ages?" inquired the Photographer. "I mean, why did people go who made no great profession of religion and, as in Chaucer, seemed to have little devotion about them?"

The answer would be that in a barbarous and cruel age, an age when the conditions of life were terribly unequal, and misrule stunted all attempts to advance,

the Church endeavoured to take up the task of smoothing things out. Her unquestioned authority enabled her to stand between the oppressor and the oppressed, to feed the hungry, and care for the orphan and the widow. But she did very much more, for she fostered and protected every one of those resources which make life worth living. Learn-



ing, art, science, owe to her alms their very existence. She took the drama under her wing, and moulded and shaped it till it was ready for Shakespeare and Ben Jonson to give it the finishing touch of genius.

And what were these pilgrimages? They were the only means by which the great mass of the population could travel with safety and cheapness. It was only under the guise of religion that people

without great influence and a long retinue could pass from place to place. There was the lord of the manor to reckon with, as well as the less authorised robbers. But the seal of the Church set the fashion. And in its capacity as a vast benefit society, of which every man, woman, and child was a member, it organised cheap excursions, establishing good hotels on the route in the shape of monasteries, where each man paid what he was able according to his means.

That plumed knight and that fayre ladye came because it was "the thing," just as modern knights and dames "do" the Rhine or the Norway Fiords. The merchant goes as a relaxation from the cares of business, and most likely spends the whole time in complaining of the expense of the new corporation, or grumbling that all the trade has been driven into the hands of foreigners by the tax on wool. Perhaps, however, he is going to buy or sell merchandise at some town on the route, and takes the opportunity to combine business, pleasure and just a whiff of spiritual reflection.

That ploughman is a vassal bound never to leave his lord's estate, unless, by making a vow of pilgrimage, he gains the Church's alliance. That apprentice wanted a holiday. A pilgrimage was just the excuse to hand. The stingiest master dared not offend against religion by refusing him the few days necessary for a work of devotion.

"Just so," interrupted Higgins.

“ ‘An idle apprentice named Brown
Demanded a week out of town,
And his boss, though distressed,
Durst deny no request
To go and adore Becket's crown.’ ”

“As for the palmer,” I concluded, ignoring the irreverent effusion, “he goes because palmers are constructed to go on pilgrimages.”

“This is where I come in,” exclaimed the Boy.

“ ‘Along the old Pilgrim's Way
Tramped a Palmer in orders grey,
With his boots full of pease,
Not because these things please,
But because he was built that way.’ ”

Higgins remarked that poetry always made him hungry, and produced the sections of the ordnance map, with a view of finding out how far we were from a suitable halting-place. As already has been stated, the map had been cut into squares to render it more portable. It was unfortunate that Higgins had forgotten whether he had numbered the squares horizontally or perpendicularly. A rather heated controversy ensued as to which was the next square.

“This must be the right one,” decided Higgins. “Here's Otford and Kemsing numbered nine, then this one, No. 15, joins on. That's where we are now, close to the cross-road, only one mile from Red Hill.”

“How can we possibly be anywhere near Red Hill?” I remonstrated. “We were ten miles east of

it when we left Otford, and have been walking due east ever since."

"You idiot, the Ordnance map must know better than you do!"

I always believe in gentleness and forbearance, even with Higgins, and continued calmly: "Cannot some stray germs of rational faculties be found somewhere amid your undeveloped cerebral nerves to lead you to the conclusion that you have possibly selected the wrong section? In this first square there's a railway running through the middle. What becomes of it if that's the next division? Does it finish up in the middle of a field without going anywhere?"

Then Higgins said he was a plain man, and didn't interfere in railroad surveying and such matters which were too high for him, and that if the London, Chatham and Dover directors chose to build a railway which ended up abruptly without a station when it was supposed to go to Maidstone, he didn't see what a hog-brained journalist had to make a fuss about.

Meanwhile the Artist had found a new square that fitted beautifully, railway and all. According to this, the spot on which we now stood was only about half a mile from Whitstable, and within ten miles of Canterbury itself. The Boy and the Photographer moved the adoption of this square, as an oyster lunch was something to look forward to with pleasurable feelings. Higgins was alone dissatisfied, because oysters did not come into season for at least three

days. Eventually he caught sight of a distant sign-post. By its aid a new square was discovered, proving that we were not very far from Wrotham.

The hope of lunch lent new energy to our steps. Presently the path ascended, and we were able to form an opinion on the view from Wrotham Hill, said to be one of the most beautiful in Kent.

Perhaps it never presented a more charming aspect than in those early days of August, 1894, when the rich hues of harvest-time combined with the fresh green of the foliage, due to the long, wet summer. As far as the eye could reach, over hill and dale stretched the squares of crimson, red, gold, and vivid yellow, with elm, beech, and poplar trees to break the monotony of pattern, and here and there darker grey patches of the long grass, for haymaking had scarcely commenced, although the corn was fast ripening.

These fertile valleys owe half their beauty to human agency. It is man who has arrayed the ground in this robe of diverse colour, and has kept in check the forest that once invaded the whole plain. This presence of order, the sign of regular and peaceful existence alike in hedge and stile, or in cottage and church-tower, forms the peculiar charm of English scenery. Washington Irving well remarks that for this calm and settled beauty England must always appeal to every visitor of Anglo-Saxon race as "The Home Country."

CHAPTER V.

WROTHAM.

By virtue of his office as master of the forage department Higgins was deputed to order dinner, for, whatever be his other deficiencies, in this, his own special department, he is without equal. In the matter of the table Higgins is an indispensable guide, philosopher and friend. He knows every restaurant in Soho where French, Flemish or German dainties are to be obtained at prices to suit every purse. On *recherché table d'hôtes* he is an undisputed authority. As for brewing punch, Higgins's concoction is so strong that the ladle assumes an erect attitude in the soup tureen (a punch bowl being wanting to the furniture of our flat).

Meanwhile we had a look inside the fine old church. It was the most interesting we had yet come across, and for that reason the guide-books, with scarcely one exception, omitted to make mention of it. There were the ancient screens and canons' stalls all intact, even to the candlesticks on the former. There were piscinas, stoups and the

steps of the old chantry altars to delight an enthusiastic antiquary. There were numbers of monumental brasses with inscriptions asking for the prayers for the dead, which had somehow managed to escape the attention of any vigilant Puritan Philistine. Even the altar candlesticks were apparently of ancient date. We lingered some time in this refreshing link with our predecessors ; perhaps we should have lingered longer if the Boy had not been so hungry.

We found Higgins expostulating with a bare-armed Hebe who would have been charmingly pretty if she had not looked so stupid.

"Can't we have some cold beef, then?" said Higgins.

"Oh, if you had only come yesterday!" cried the girl, in despair.

"Look here, you fellows," said Higgins, turning to us. "There's no fowls, no roast beef, no roast mutton—in fact, I can't make out what there is."

"Let's have some steak," suggested the Boy.

"There'll be a bull killed next Monday," said the girl, brightening up, as if this was an obvious way out of the difficulty.

"Fairest damsel," said I, interposing. "Next time we visit this matchless house of entertainment we will remember to arrive yesterday or the week after. But on this visit we come in the garb of pilgrims—mere ephemeral visitors, here to-day and gone to-morrow."

"Stop a bit," cried Higgins. "Let me have one last shot. What are you going to have yourself for dinner, my dear?"

The girl admitted that there was some cold ham.



We were saved. It is rather irritating to climb down from Higgins' *menu* to a meal off cold ham. But we were hungry, and with the addition of some home-made pickles and some Welsh cheese, washed down by that Kentish ale which is surpassed in no part of the world, we did very well.

During the repast a warrior came into the bar arrayed in Hussar tunic, forage cap of the Grenadiers, Army Service trousers—much too short—and elastic side boots. We adjudged him to be the drummer of the local band. He was evidently amorous of our fair attendant, who displayed a rustic fund of wit and repartee in dealing with him that led us to reconsider our verdict on her supposed stupidity. Higgins said every one has a *forte* if you can only find it out. He had an uncle who was so stupid that he had to get his wife to write his letters for him,

who never read any newspapers, never had any opinions on any subject, never even knew who was going to win the Derby—in fact, was a perfect idiot. Yet that man could balance a tin whistle on the tip of his nose with a skill that would make the Archbishop of Canterbury turn green with envy.

The Photographer wanted to change plates, as he was running short. On inquiry we were referred to the ostler, who said he could show us a splendid "dark room," in which we could change them without fear of "premature exposure." Accordingly he conducted us to the stable. When this was objected to on the ground that, even if light had not penetrated through an entrance five feet wide and unprovided with a door, there were numberless holes in the roof through which the sun was shining with all its might, he was quite unabashed. He found us another apartment, which, supposing it had been light tight, would have been unsuitable for other and more delicate reasons. So it was decided with reluctance not to risk a plate on the interior of Wrotham Church.

A tramp of two miles along the dusty high-road, and then into a wayside inn to inquire the nearest way to the Stone Circle at Addington, which we had special permission to visit. We derived some edification from the remarks of the rustics, to whom it was quite a new experience to find that any one was interested in the "stones."

"Qud Johnny Foord ought to be yere. He did

think of they stouns, clearing away the bushes from them, and dusting off the moss."

"Man and boy I've seed they stouns sixty year," remarked one old oracle, sententiously. "And mor', feyther never knew the man whot put them theyre."

Asked if he had any theory respecting who placed them there, he replied in the negative. It must have taken a traction engine and several men to have got them in position. The stoues were just there, and must be taken for better or worse, like the rain that had spoilt the best hay crop he ever seed, and the Parish Councils Bill, which he didn't understand.

Still, he showed us a footpath which shortened our journey considerably. It led us near the bed of a "nailborne," or intermittent spring, which, according to Hasted, whenever it bursts out, causes the trout in the Leybourne river to be red instead of white.

There seems to be something in the soil of Kent to fire the imagination and impel the pedestrian to beguile the tedium of the way with truthful anecdote. The simple incident of a common grass snake darting across our path inspired our usually matter-of-fact Photographer to make an effort at fiction.

"An old gentleman once lived at Sydenham. He was dreadfully afraid of snakes. He never ventured out of doors during the summer for a walk, for fear he should be bitten. I believe he had had some dream, or some gipsy had prophesied something on the subject. Well, one day a hamper of bananas was sent him, and while he was unpacking it a beastly

little whip-snake, hardly three inches long, darted out of the basket and stung him, so that he died within ten minutes. It's perfectly true. I know a fellow who has seen the house it happened at."

Higgins thought he could beat that story. He had an uncle who was in great request at masonic banquets. One evening this uncle returned home about 3 a.m. from a special function in a more than usually hilarious condition, and for some reason or other went down into the kitchen. To his horror, the whole place appeared to be swarming with snakes. Seized with remorse, he went upstairs and forthwith registered a most terrible, irrevocable vow that he would never touch intoxicating liquors again. In the morning he discovered that a friend had sent him a hamper of live eels, and, their prison not being a very secure one, they had ventured out to explore the neighbourhood.

The Boy said that if he had an uncle, about whom he could not tell a better snake story than that, he would brain him with a meat axe.

The country now began to assume a wilder appearance. We were no longer in fertile Holmsdale, and the high banks of wild flowers and hazels had given place to bracken and such sombre trees as can exist on a barren sandy soil. We were entering a strange region, a weird and mystic holy ground. For this pilgrims' way which we were traversing is far older than the days of St. Thomas. It was the highway by which pilgrims of a long extinct race came, on the

one side from the West country, and on the other side from Sandwich or Dover, to assist in the rites of a religion stamped out of existence by the Roman conquerors of Britain. The whole district from Addington to Boxley, and from Malling to Snodland—seven or eight miles in each direction—is one vast cemetery and sacred ground of these early peoples. Everywhere are to be found remains of cromlechs, stone circles, deep unexplored caverns ; an avenue of stones



appears to line the sacred way from Addington to Kit's Coity House. Addington Church is placed on what Mr. Wright declares to be a veritable pyramid, similar to those found in Central America.

The Stone Circle in Addington Park, which we had made a detour to visit, is of oval shape, and seventeen stones may still be traced. Probably it was a place of tribal assembly, one stone representing each family, as in the days of the Israelites. Hard by is a shapeless mass of overturned stones, each

immense in size. Colebrook, in a volume of the *Archæologia*, suggests that this is the tomb of Catigern, the British hero who was killed in the battle of Aylesford, when the Britons under Vortigern opposed the landing of the Jutes, commanded by Horsa, who was also slain, and whose tomb he supposes to be at Kit's Coity House. This may be, but it is more probably the Druidical altar of the tribe who assembled at the Circle.

But all speculation here seems thrown away. It is even difficult to feel any very deep or lasting interest in the remains in their present state. Could we have imagined them in the days of old, with some picturesque ceremony in progress, or recalled the scene when the Romans burst the stockade and butchered the half-naked barbarians, we might have been better satisfied. But there is practically nothing to help the fancy in the work of reconstruction. The storms of two thousand years have worn away the soft stones and the hillocks on which they rest, and drifts of sand have buried them till they are hardly noticeable above the ground amidst the bracken and weeds. The natives have found here a convenient quarry for house-building and road-mending purposes. Even Mark Twain, who shed copious tears over the tomb of Adam, would fail to squeeze out one saline drop in a case like this. A man cannot fairly be expected to be sentimental without having something definite to be sentimental about.

The Boy's face brightened for a moment when he

learnt that Roman-British coins are occasionally found here. With a little encouragement and a spade he would have staked out a claim and started in business as a golddigger. Higgins found in one



of the guide-books that at Ryarsh, a mile or two to the north, there were deep pits with subterranean passages not yet explored. With some ropes and a few candles he thought the party might acquire some glory and perhaps wealth. But we were already beginning to view guide-books with distrust.

So strong was our feeling of disappointment that it was not without some secret relief that we discovered that we had left Addington Church too far on the right. We resolutely declined to go back and inspect it, even though it bears on its tower the following unique inscription :

“ In fourteen hundred and none
Here was neither stick nor stone.
In fourteen hundred and three
The goodly building which you see.”

CHAPTER VI.

LEAVES FROM A CANNIBAL COOKERY BOOK.

"WANT a lift?"

This was a seasonable interruption to a heated discussion on the route given in the Ordnance map. Turning round, we saw a benevolent-looking, white-haired clergyman, seated in an open carriage. He was going nearly as far as Aylesford.

"I think I can squeeze in all your party," he continued.

Without a pang we gave up all idea of visiting Malling Abbey, and, regardless of the look of reproach which the horse turned upon us, we scrambled in.

Our benefactor turned out to be a most chatty and amiable old gentleman. He agreed with our conclusions with regard to the Stone Circle, and our tribal theory he was able to support by instances of similar remains which he had examined in the South Sea Islands, where he had resided for some time, and where almost similar altars to the one at Addington were at the beginning of the present century, he

declared, used for human sacrifices. It was like Higgins' impudence to here introduce a silly and pointless story about an uncle of his who went out as a missionary to Timbuctoo. He had lost one eye as a boy. They heard nothing about him for some years, till at last an exploring party came across a rusty old cauldron with a glass eye sticking to the bottom, so that it was inferred that this was the remains of Higgins' uncle. With the laudable object of shaming Higgins, I told an artless little tale about a relative of mine who went out as a missionary. One day the natives informed him that he was to be invited to a banquet at which it was proposed that he should serve as the principal *pièce de résistance*. My relative fortunately possessed great presence of mind and a wooden leg. The latter he unscrewed and offered to the cook, saying that they might have the rest of him presently. The leg not proving exactly palatable or digestible, it was decided to remove stewed missionary from the *menu*.

A smile crossed the face of our entertainer. "My young friends, if you will pardon me for saying so, I fear your stories are not quite in accordance with fact. Still, whether or no, my own experiences are much stranger. Truth is always more startling than fiction. Some years ago, when I was returning to my labours from a cruise, our vessel anchored for a day or two off the coast of New Guinea to take in water, and hearing that the king of that district was only a few miles' journey from that spot, I decided to pay a

visit. A very intelligent and agreeable young man named Down volunteered to accompany me. His majesty, a genial and portly old savage, received us with the greatest politeness, and ushered us into a cool palm-thatched shed, telling us in broken English that dinner would be served in an hour or two. After he had rested for a while, Down remarked that he would like to go out and have a look round the village. I remained behind, as I felt drowsy on account of the heat.

"I was awakened by the dinner-bell. A most excellent repast was set on the table, and the king and I set to work to demolish it. One of the dishes was particularly delicate and appetising, and in handing my plate up for a third helping I inquired of his majesty where he could have obtained such excellent mutton.

"‘Golly, massa,’ his majesty replied with a bland expression, as if most gratifying information was being conveyed, ‘Dat are de young massa what with you come.’

"It was impossible, of course, for me to show any offence, as the old rascal evidently thought that he was paying me the highest possible compliment. But you may imagine that I took the earliest opportunity to decamp, and ever since I have been unable to touch South Down mutton.

"But my most peculiar experience of this kind," continued the old gentleman, "was in a small harbour in one of the Society Islands. When we arrived we

found that the whole population was keeping holiday. All the natives were arrayed in the newest bathing costumes, flags were flying, tom-toms beating, and blunderbusses exploding in all directions. I asked one of the native boatmen to inform me of the nature of the solemnity. His reply was to smack his chubby lips and point with glee to a rakish brigantine flying the American flag. Subsequent investigation proved that this vessel was laden with a dainty highly esteemed in this part of the world. Now, gentlemen, three guesses apiece—tell me if you can in what that delicacy consisted?”

We named every conceivable dainty—frogs, snails, curry powder, rats, and potato parings.

“You will never guess it,” said the old gentleman, at length. “In fact, I should never have believed it, if I had not actually witnessed it with my own eyes. The vessel was full, gentlemen, of mummies—Egyptian mummies.”

There were no more interruptions from the abashed Higgins. And as our narrator rambled on through every subject of interest, we listened reverently and attentively, for he knew we were in the presence of the past master of an art in which we were mere dabbling amateurs.

“And now, gentlemen, this is where we must part,” said the old clergyman, as the carriage stopped outside a pretty rose-embowered cottage. “That is, unless you care to come in and have a cup of tea.”

We were all accepting with alacrity, but a meaning

look from the coachman caught my eye, and I pleaded that we were due elsewhere, and did not know our way in the dark (it was now past sunset). So we shook hands with the dear old fellow, and promised to call on some other occasion, and to send him a full set of photographs.

As soon as a man-servant had taken charge of him at the cottage, the coachman volunteered a few words of explanation. The old clergyman was a lunatic. He had been an extremely earnest missionary years ago, and after most successful labours in the Antipodes, he had returned to take a living in England. Then a very cruel case of deceit occurred to him, and after being used to the simple God-fearing savages, the shock of such wickedness in Christian England turned his brain. Frivolous conversation is his only resource against terrible fits of depression, and his keepers for that reason never object to him entertaining strangers when not in a dangerous mood.

"But what wonderful gifts wasted," sighed the Artist. "How many men in Fleet Street would think all his sorrows too dear a price to pay for such an imagination?"

CHAPTER VII.

IN QUEST OF THE "UPPER BELL."

THE shades of night were falling fast as we crossed the Medway by the ancient bridge and tramped through Aylesford, chiefly memorable for its priory, where the first house of the Carmelites was established in England under St. Simon Stock. There are some pretty bits of riverside architecture so far as we could judge in the twilight, and one of the guide-books asserted that the church and town were beautifully situated on the slope of the hill. It was too dark for us to ascertain the correctness of this statement, although Higgins wasted nearly half a box of fuses in a vain attempt to prove it.

Guide-book writers absurdly misunderstand their duties when they begin telling us what we ought to admire. We expect to find in a guide-book information with regard to facts, where things are, and how to get there. The rest is our own province, and it is impertinent to bias our judgment by introducing rhapsodies about one place, or contemptuous remarks about another. "*Quot homines, tot sententiæ.*"

When the guide criticises he ceases to be a reliable authority, speaking *ex cathedra*, and becomes a biased individual. A fatal element of uncertainty is at once introduced. We are left in doubt whether his admiration or the reverse is due to—

- (1) Circumstances of time and place.
- (2) Circumstances of association.
- (3) Circumstances of expediency.

Each of these heads will allow of several subdivisions. Under (1) we have to consider: (*a*) The remote possibility that the object or view is really interesting. (*b*) Whether, perhaps, the writer hit upon some particular spot, or time of the year when the effect is specially striking. (*c*) His own personal condition; particularly whether he had just partaken of a sumptuous repast, and good digestion had prepared him to feel exhilaration at anything and everything. This last might also be said to belong to our second head.

Under circumstances of association we may speculate on the fortune or misfortune which may have occurred to him in connection with the locality. The possible subdivisions are innumerable.

Men of taste usually hold up Gower Street to reprobation as a hideous example of ugliness and monotony even among London thoroughfares. Association has given it, to me, a sublimity in which La Rambla at Barcelona is lacking.

She was attending the same lectures at University College when I was reading for my degree; she was

at least ten years my senior, and I have been since told that she looked it. Nevertheless, the first time that dainty figure sailed into the class-room, and those dark-lashed gipsy eyes looked coyly into mine, I hauled down the flag and surrendered.

Shortly afterwards I began to deviate about two miles from the direct route from Hampstead to University Street. One of the other girls was a schoolfellow of my sisters, and then we made the astonishing discovery that Gower Street was on the way home for all three.

We were not allowed to sit together at lectures. The harsh rules of an unsympathetic faculty forbade it. But there were ten minutes each morning and ten minutes each evening, twenty minutes every day of happy communing to look forward to in dear old Gower Street.

Even after that tall, swarthy idiot turned up and was introduced to me as her *fiancé*, Gower Street was still an attractive vale, where my grief-stricken heart could bleed anew in silent anguish and brood on blighted memories.

We met again the other day, and now the thought of my lucky escape fills me with joy. Whenever I feel doleful, whenever a fit of depression seizes me, I fly for comfort to glorious old Gower Street.

To return to our sheep—I mean the leaders of those silly mortals who consider it their duty to endorse the statements in guide-books and condemn the honest Smelfungus. We have still Section 3

to consider, viz., circumstances of expediency. Our guide may possibly have some private knife to grind. He may be a shareholder in the railway forming the only means of access to the spot, or he may own some land or even an hotel in the district. Or he may have not had time to visit the place himself, and have taken the opinion of somebody else, whose status may again be classified under one or other of the heads which I have suggested.

The worst part of all is when the guide-book [↓] adds injury to insult by proceeding to give imperfect or erratic information on indispensable matters of fact.

We were one and a half miles from the "Upper Bell," so the guide-book, the Ordnance map, and the landlord of the "Sun" agreed in informing us. So we wended our way along a very straight road, congratulating ourselves on the labours of the day and their speedy termination. But, after walking two miles in complete darkness, it was considered desirable to make further inquiries. Accordingly, we asked a ploughman homeward bound how far we were from the "Upper Bell." The answer was one and a half miles.

We walked three more miles, as far as we could calculate, and decided to rest awhile. Two of the pilgrims were missing. Higgins struck a match and consulted the Ordnance map. It is probably due to an error as to the correct square, that he found we were in the middle of Romney Marsh! Just then we perceived lights ahead. The Artist, who had been

in this neighbourhood before, said that these were the lights of the "Upper Bell." We put our best feet forward and soon overtook the lights. These were found to be produced by fusees which the two missing pilgrims were burning as signals of distress. Higgins, after climbing up a sign-post and deciphering nothing, again consulted the Ordnance map, and moved that we camp out on the spot, as there was no habitation marked anywhere within ten miles. But the others decided to push on, as a cold mist was beginning to fall.

We inquired of a rural couple who strolled by lovingly arm in arm how far we were from the "Upper Bell." The answer was one and a half miles.

So we stumbled up a steep, stony hill, and along two miles of footpath, passing on the way a cromlech which looked too gigantic and ghostly to take rest under. Then some rough steps brought us into the high road, and an asthmatic tramp informed us that we were one and a half miles from the "Upper Bell."

We walked on briskly, although our nether limbs were growing stiff, and a fog was rapidly gathering as the road ascended steeply, and we were beginning to feel very cold and hungry. A terrible misgiving had seized me. I had secured rooms at the "Upper Bell" on the suggestion of the guide-book? Was this "Upper Bell" a grisly rustic jest, some terrible legendary spectral inn that receded as the traveller hurried forward to reach it? I had to reprove the Artist for

humming "Excelsior" in a minor key, because it tended so much to depress one's spirits. The Photographer told us he had read a story about some travellers in the Black Forest, who inquired of a shepherd the way to an inn, and for a joke the shepherd told them the way, although he knew that the inn had been burnt down some years before. They were found the next morning dead, with the marks of diabolic fingers burnt into their throats.

I cannot say what would have ever become of us had we not at this moment overtaken the village policeman. The "Upper Bell" was still one and a half miles off, but we knew that the powers of darkness, sirens, ghouls, or whatever they may be, become impotent and flee in terror at the advent of a representative of law or order. Under his wing our spirits revived, and hope returned to cheer us. Soon the sound of revelry, the chant of comic choruses, and the chinking of glasses made itself heard through the mist. A few minutes more and we had reached the "Upper Bell."

Higgins solemnly promised to commit the Ordnance map to the flames at an early opportunity.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE "UPPER BELL."

"THERE is nothing which has been yet contrived by man, by which so much happiness is produced, as by



a good tavern or inn." The "Upper Bell" was just such a good old-fashioned house of entertainment for

man and beast as Dr. Johnson must have had in his mind when he uttered that immortal axiom. It is an inn worthy of being mentioned only with houses of the highest rank in legendary lore, such as are provided for Mr. Pickwick. In quaintness it might vie with the "Maypole" at Chigwell; for good fare with the "Crown" at Rochester, and inns of a class that have passed away from the memory of all but the readers of Dickens. Our series of one and a



half mile tramps were no longer regretted; well repaid was the climb up the steep acclivities of Bluebell Hill to a height of 2,000 feet above the sea. (The Ordnance map says 450 feet, but we know that the Ordnance map is wrong).

We were expected. Still better, we were welcomed. A wash under the pump in a mysterious apartment dedicated principally to butter churns and home-made jam prepared us for a hearty supper. Then we wandered downstairs into a long room in the south wing, where a village concert was in progress. While

a gaily-dressed gipsy-girl detailed to the assembled company, with the assistance of the piano, her dreams of her little boy, the Artist made furtive sketches of the audience. In one corner a private and a plough-boy had exchanged headgear in token of ebrious amity, and were reclining arm in arm. On a table opposite sat a Chatham variety of the Cockney



species with green boughs of privet and blackthorn stuck into every available crevice in his garment and hat, producing a certain hybrid effect not usually heard of outside Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Hard by was an elderly grizzled weed of a labourer, whose efforts to obtain liquor at a minimum expense to himself were a source

of entertainment. Every newcomer was greeted with an invitation to drink out of his mug. On examination the guest invariably discovered that the vessel was empty, and thereupon felt bound to stand the price of its refilling. We saw this device successfully sprung upon at least seven people during the quarter of an hour before the heat of the room and

the noise induced us to retreat to an upper chamber where we held a concert on our own account. Higgins discovered that he was a pianist, and the Boy's rich tenor voice in classical melody was inexpressibly soothing. But an adjournment to bed was voted after the Boy had attempted a comic song. He laughed so much that it was quite impossible to understand the subject.

The buxom, motherly housekeeper ushered us into bedrooms adorned with quaint old prints of the "Fool's Marriage,"

and queer religious pictures of a Spanish type. The bedsteads were unique carved four-posters, curtained all round, and with baldachinos of semi-ecclesiastical pattern.



The Artist, as he retired into his enclosure and sank with a sigh of content into the depths of the soft bed, muttered that in his dreams he should be a canonised saint at rest in some stately shrine. In but as long as it takes to write the words, the expedition was wrapt in slumber regardless of the wind and rain that beat upon the casements of the "Upper Bell"—ominous prospect for the morrow! What cared we in those delicious soft valleys of calico? Our labours well concluded

for the day, we slept the sleep of the just under those beatifying canopies!

Thus ran my dream : Within a massive gold frame I saw a canvas. Instinctively I knew that the picture must be one of entrancing beauty, but it was so encrusted with dirt and age that no traces of its subject were visible. Some of those that stood by cried, " Let us fetch water and wash off this dirt, that we may see once more the portrait of the great Master."



Near at hand was a well. Eager volunteers filled buckets with the water, and started to scrub off some of the dirt. Presently I was able to discern the features of a man in the prime of life. Still the work seemed old and faded ; only by a stretch of imagination could one recall the fine features and kingly expression that I knew ought to be there.

Then one of my companions said, " The water you have brought is too muddy and impure for our pur-

pose. It came from the Well of Hearsay. Before we can perceive the true picture we must procure water from the Well of Truth."

A few of the more adventurous started forth at his bidding. But the Well of Truth was deep, and its sides precipitous and difficult to climb. Moreover, they were coated with liquid tar. Nearly every one spilt their water before they had succeeded in regaining the level ground. At last one young man succeeded in moistening his handkerchief in the water of Truth, and returned eagerly to test its virtue on the picture.

Alas! He was too zealous. His first vigorous rub revealed one streak of exquisite colour, but beside it was a smear of tar from the sides of the well. "He is ruining our picture," cried the others in dismay. "The Water of Hearsay at least enabled us to guess at the real beauty. But this foolish wretch has defiled our treasure."

Then commenced a scene of confusion. Some tried to seize the offender, others took his part. Blows were freely given and returned. Louder and louder grew the tumult.

I awoke with a start. A deadly conflict, with yells and groans, was really going on in the next room, occupied by the Photographer, the Boy and Higgins. The Artist was already out of bed, and was just groping for the matches.

Ages seemed to pass before we succeeded in lighting the candle, and hastily entered the adjacent

apartment to find the Photographer holding Higgins down on the floor and pummelling him heartily. Not without considerable exertion and injury to the furniture we separated the combatants and instituted an immediate court of inquiry.

Higgins declared that he had been dreaming that he was an ancient Druid engaged in sacrificing a golden calf on the altar in the Sacred Grove at Addington. Just as he had lit up the sacred pyre,



the victim jumped up and bit him on the nose. And then several other golden calves, who were waiting their turn, had set upon him and knocked him about unmercifully.

The Photographer said that all he remembered was hearing, in a dream as he supposed, cries of distress. On rushing to the spot he found the housekeeper was being carried off by the drummer of miscellaneous uniform. The latter, without provocation, had struck him in the face, and so, of course he had retaliated. He was quite surprised to find that he had been fighting with Higgins, and apologised humbly for the mistake. The entire party now proceeded to examine the Boy, and torture elicited the following particulars. The Boy was not accustomed to be in such a strange

kind of bed, entirely surrounded with curtains. He felt lonely and could not sleep. Idleness finally led to mischief. Creeping softly between the beds, and pulling the curtains aside, he had first tweaked Higgins' nose, and then slapped the Photographer in the face. Each starting up had collided with the other.

To secure against any repetition of these disturbances, we placed Higgins in the other room as far as possible from the Photographer, and locked the Boy in a third room which happened to be unoccupied. Peace having been thus restored, the haven of happy dreams was again reached, and we snored rhythmically till a knock at the door informed us that it was past nine o'clock.

CHAPTER IX.

WAYSIDE MUSINGS.

ONCE upon a time there was a Colonel who had grown old, and had retired from active service to spend his declining years in lying about his ancient prowess, and drawing his half-pay. Every morning his valet had instructions to wake him precisely at eight a.m. and inform him that it was time for Parade, in order that he might enjoy the ineffable bliss of turning over on his other side and murmuring, "D—m Parade."

We had agreed overnight, if the weather permitted, to rise somewhere about half-past seven and start off immediately, so as to make the best use of the morning. But at nine o'clock we were still in bed, although the sun was shining brightly in at our windows, and all nature wore her sweetest smile. She seemed to be trying to convince us "That storm of rain last night was all imagination on your part. Come out and see how dry the grass is. Only listen how joyful a song the lark and the thrush are singing." Ah, but it is so much nicer in bed, and I withstood her advances

till the Artist put the nasty cold sponge into my bed. Then I arose and donned my vesture, at the same time forcibly remarking on the impropriety of these practical jokes.

Some people are lazy, to be sure ! The language of Higgins and the Photographer was quite unnecessarily vulgar when I gently inserted the sponge beneath each coverlet, and sat on the bed to assist the cool refreshing stream in trickling down their arms and necks. How any one could want to be sluggishly snoring when by just getting up he could behold such an exquisite view from his bedroom window is more than I can understand !

When we had gone downstairs and across the dip of the road to the brink of the hill, the full glories of the scene, once dearest to the heart of Charles Dickens, burst upon us. It is not so rich in colour as the view from Wrotham Hill, but more grand and complete. Beneath us was a level wooded plain of triangular shape. Towards the south, it extended broader and broader, vanishing into the distant mists, but on every other side it was closed in by hills ever diverse in shape and garniture, here grassy undulating slopes, there rising in rugged grandeur, limestone boulders elbowing with the herbage, and again wooded up to the summit. And through all wound the silver Medway glistening in the sun past mansion and tower, kiln and spire. Therein is the glory of Kentish scenery, rich wealds and chalk downs ; Kent has no hills or rivers like the Alps or the Amazon. The charm of

its scenery is not due to bigness but to finish and refinement ; as well as an exquisite proportion which conceals deficiencies in actual dimensions.

What appetites we have acquired after breathing a country atmosphere for just twenty-four hours ! Only a day or two before I had seen Higgins toying leisurely with a *chef d'œuvre* of Cafe Royal cookery, and finally send it away half finished. But, oh ! to see how fast the eggs and bacon disappeared. And the coffee. Again and again the jugs were replenished, till the landlord stood aghast, warning us that he had not more than half a dozen pounds in the house, and that the nearest grocer was three miles off, and that it was Sunday !

I must own that I have a considerable weakness for coffee. Not that black, bitter preparation affected on the other side of the Channel, and which the man who has taken a cheap excursion to Paris ever afterwards professes to like—but real, genuine English coffee, manufactured from burnt peas and scarlet runners, well seasoned with chicory. It is my one vice that I cannot resist the seductions of this fluid. I intend some day to have this text, "Coffee is a Mockery," illuminated in gold and colours, and hung in my bedroom where I may be reminded of its precepts each night that I retire to rest, and where each morning those truthful words may greet my waking eyes.

A young acquaintance of mine was appointed to a newspaper of the description known as a "trade

journal." It was part of his duty to accompany the gentleman who looked after the advertisement department and "write up" the advantages of such wares as were advertised in the paper. One fine morning the pair started forth. At the first firm that they called upon, the manager invited them to a neighbouring tavern, where they imbibed several glasses of bitter ale. Further on the junior partner of another well-known house was induced to join them in similar potations. The next call was on one of their best customers, and he declined to allow any less hilarious vintage than champagne to be discussed in his company. About mid-day they adjourned to a trysting-place, where newspaper advertisement canvassers do much congregate, and exchanged sundry "smiles" with these brethren. In the afternoon they had an appointment with a famous whisky distiller, and it was necessary to sample his wares to a considerable extent. Afterwards they proceeded to a foreign wine-shop, where some Hollands was necessary to take away the taste of the whisky.

Now, my friend assures me that up to this time he was perfectly sober and clear-headed. In fact, his careful and voluminous shorthand notes, and neatly-docketed labels and circulars corroborate his evidence. But a remorseless decree of fate led them to call on a gentleman who professed so-called temperance principles, and invited them to drink his health in coffee. Then a charitable policeman took pity on them and put them in a cab. He found

the address of the office in a card-case which was sticking out of the canvasser's pocket ; otherwise he would not have known where to direct the cabman to drive to. The coffee had made them hopelessly drunken and senseless paralytics.

To me was confided the sad task of taking that young man home to his doting parents. What tears of sorrow they wept as he was carried up to bed and left to sleep off his potation. When I informed them that coffee had produced this disastrous result, they shook their heads and told me that I was a heartless trifler. That is the worst of it. Nobody can be persuaded how dangerously intoxicating this insinuating hypocrite of a beverage coffee is.

When we had made such a splendid "dark room" to change the plates in, by holding up the bed-clothes over the window, it was not the Artist's clumsiness that caused the chair to slip at the worst possible moment, and so spoil our views of the Medway Valley. The Photographer need not have suggested that it was my fault for getting up just then and allowing Higgins to acquire momentum by the force of gravitation. It was all the fault of the coffee, which had made the party unreasonable and destitute in foresight.

Our bill was the next consideration. It surprised us. The landlord said that he made a principle of not overcharging pilgrims, but considering that we had eaten all his bacon, and kept all the household engaged in brewing coffee for upwards of two hours,

it would be unjust to his business to make it less than it was. We agreed with him.

I will not give the details of that bill, because I should probably lose a reputation for veracity which this chronicle has hitherto carefully preserved. But this I will say. All you pilgrims who have but a few pounds to spend on your holiday, and do not object to old-fashioned ways and tolerable cooking in the midst of lovely scenery and soft, balmy, invigorating air, pack up your changes of raiment and seek the "Upper Bell." And if you stop as long as your money lasts, you will have enjoyed a long holiday.

CHAPTER X.

CATIGERN AND HORSA.

BEFORE I had seen Kit's Coity House, I had always supposed that the great problem regarding it was by what mechanical methods it could possibly have been



erected. The pictures and the descriptions in guide-books or archæological journals lead one to expect a stupendous erection that would have been impossible unless high scientific knowledge, or, as one enthu-

siast suggests, the Ice Age had come to the rescue. In reality, the boulders of which it is composed are only sufficiently large to have prevented for say two thousand years any one attempting the task of carting it away. Given some twenty able-bodied labourers under the direction of a foreman sufficiently versed in the art of appropriate objurgations, and there is no difficulty in fixing up on end three blocks of stone averaging eight feet in length, and then placing a slab twelve feet long on the top, provided that there was a definite object accomplished. The only problem is to find that object.

Of course the simplest solution would be to regard the cromlech as a Druid altar, were it not that the Druids were much better masons than the builders of Kit's Coity House. The stones have never been squared, and there is no attempt at mortising the supports to the covering stone. Besides, there is something so dry and hackneyed about Druid altars, so unattractively vague, that we cannot be satisfied with the explanation. A more picturesque idea associates the monument with the great scene in Kentish history, which was enacted on these slopes above Aylesford, the battle between the invading Jutes under Hengist and Horsa, and the Britons under Vortimer.

Vortigern, the British king, had won a glorious victory over the Picts and Scots with the aid of the Northern pirates, and the mead bowl circulated bravely round the festive board at Lindum, where

the heroes celebrated their success. At the banquet there appeared before the dazzled eyes of the king a vision of beauty as fair as the angels of paradise. Rowena, the golden-haired daughter of Hengist, stood before him. Filling a golden goblet with wine, she touched it with her lips and wished him health. Then, kneeling at his feet, she presented the cup to the royal guest. At once he loved her, and desired her for his queen. Hengist consented, and received from the doting Vortigern the Isle of Thanet.

Act 2 shows the Isle of Thanet becoming too crowded by reason of the vast hordes of hungry Jutes who hurried over to possess it. They cast a longing eye on the peaceful vales across the Stour. A pretext for war is easily found. And so, one summer evening, seventeen ships discharge five thousand warriors at Rochester, who march along the eastern bank of the Medway. They put up at the "Upper Bell," and severely tax the resources of that already famous hostelry.

In the morning word is brought by a trusty scout that the Britons are encamped in the valley to withstand their advance. "To arms!" they cry, eager for the fray. But either their intellects have been confused by too copious draughts of coffee at breakfast, or else the Britons trained in Roman tactics receive them with the dreaded *testudo*. Their ranks are broken, and they retreat demoralised to the hillside. Again they rally for a fierce onslaught; again they are ignominiously repulsed.

But hark! A Saxon bard advances chanting the praises of the great Horsa. His totem is the sea-horse, whose mane of foam is the tempest, and whose bridle is the wide Western gale. Who will accept the challenge of the invincible Horsa?

Scarce has his song concluded when a slight figure approaches from the ranks of the Britons, and with savage laughter the wild ocean buccaneers perceive that he is but a stripling. Will the great giant Horsa engage with boys? But young Catigern stands there devoid of fear awaiting the coming of his challenger. And, like some hawk swooping upon a sparrow, the great red-haired giant rushes forward, as if by mere weight he would crush to the earth his audacious enemy.

But Catigern stands his ground bravely, confident in the training of his fencing-master, one who had earned his reputation in the gladiatorial combats at Dorchester. The German's lunges and circular swoops are warded off easily with simple guards in tierce and carte. No one is hurt in the first round. Horsa becomes excited, he will get at that ridiculous little enemy, who slips about so actively and is all muscle and liteness. He swings his weapon furiously around. Ah! Nothing can resist that! He is going to decapitate the vermin!

Not at all! Catigern neatly ducks, and while the great sword whistles above his head, he pinks his opponent, jerking aside the shield. Only a flesh wound. But it is first blood.

The next round is a brilliant display of science. Catigern knows by this time all his antagonist's methods, and teases him with endless octaves, round parades, and double counters. Parrying a more than usually powerful drawing cut, the tempered steel snaps. The heroes throw away the useless hilts and draw their daggers. Each grasps the right



wrist of the other. Weight and mature sinew is now going to tell against supple youth and skill. Slowly and surely the German giant is forcing his blade towards the Briton's heart.

To Catigern like a flash comes the remembrance of that trick he saw in the fight at Vincennes with the Gothic captives. It is his only chance. Suddenly he drops his dagger, trips up Horsa, and as the giant falls heavily, he concentrates all the force he can

bring, with both hands on his enemy's wrist. He hears the snap, if the yell of pain had not told sufficiently well that he has sprained it.

But Horsa is not vanquished yet. He has dragged Catigern down with him, has seized him by the throat, and is drawing him towards the dagger held between his teeth.

From that fierce, desperate grip Catigern knows there is no release. He will choke long before the moment of impalement arrives. His own dagger, where is it? In that last roll his feet have touched something sharp. Half sick with suffocation he feels for it, and jerks it upward with his toes. He has reached it. With his left hand he grasps it!

A minute more, and Catigern stands covered with blood and dust, with dizzy brain and aching nerves over the dead body of savage Horsa. The stump of his broken sword had turned the scale.

Not long does Catigern live to boast his victory. Twenty avenging spears are hurled upon him by the furious and disappointed Jutes. He falls mortally wounded, and fierce rages the conflict for hours around the bodies of the two heroes.

Horsa is dead. And that night, while amid the glare of the torches his men drag the boulders down from the hills to build him an imperishable monument, the Bard sings his elegy. He chants the countless exploits of this mighty man of valour, of all the men he had slain, of all the women he had made widows, of plains laid waste, and churches ran-

sacked, and how at last he had been slain by the magical arts of these island sorcerers.

"But the guide-book says there's another cromlech further down the hill. Where does that come in?"

No one but Higgins would have interrupted in that unseasonable way. Higgins always wants a theory that brings in everything within a four-mile radius. I knew all about that other cromlech—now mutilated and overthrown by some last-century seeker after treasure—but I had purposely left it out, hoping that none of the others would discover it. Higgins had spoilt everything, and all my beautiful story toppled to pieces like a house of cards. No! I could not account for the other cromlech. Life is too short to spend in hunting about for the meaning of every heap of paving-stones I come across.

It is not at all probable that one is the tomb of Catigern. Two hostile armies are not likely to put up monuments of their fallen leaders within a stone's throw of each other. If they had agreed as much as that they would have gone further and formed a syndicate to erect an extra fine and large monument to enshrine the pair of heroes, so that they might fight their battles together through endless ages in Valhalla.

"Perhaps," suggested the Boy, "they built two monuments so that the Britons should not know where to look if they wished to dig up Horsa."

"Not likely, Boy," I replied. "The desecration of the dead is a product of modern civilisation."

“ Besides,” added the Artist, “ duplication cheapens, even when it does not destroy distinction. It savours of Italy rather than Jutland, and it involves unforeseen difficulties. I can tell you a story to illustrate this point.”

As the Artist was the only one of the party who had not as yet contributed to our entertainment, we pressed him to continue.

CHAPTER XI.

MERODAB AND SHAKONESER,

Or the Perils of Duplicated Distinction.

SOME fifty centuries ago—or maybe nine and forty—
In the midst of Asia Minor dwelt a monarch rich and
haughty.

He ruled o'er territories vast, but where? 'tis now a
mystery ;

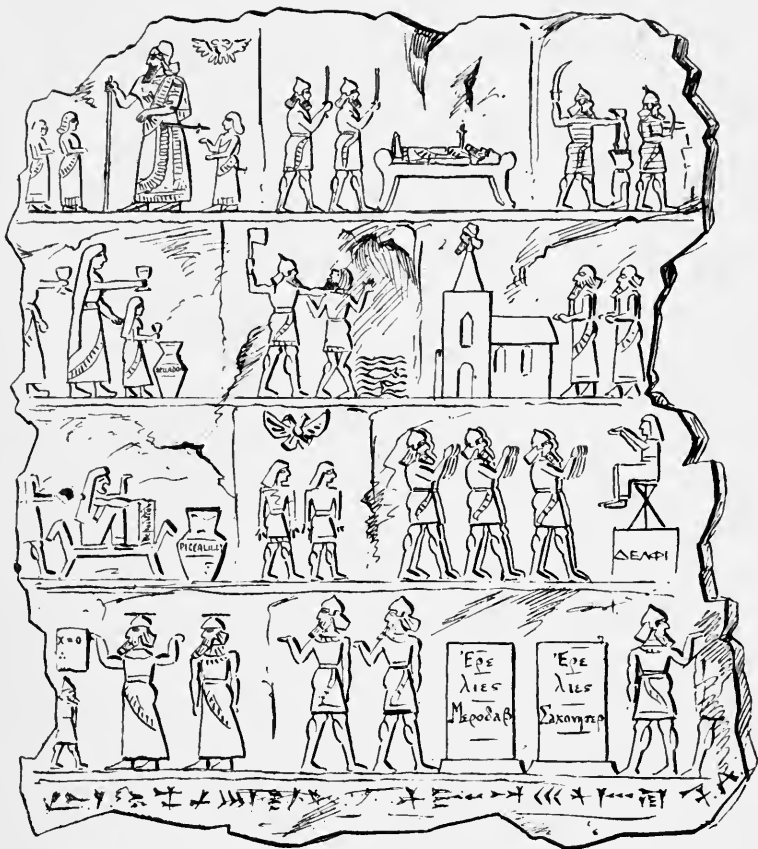
No particulars occur in Dr. Butler's "Ancient
History."

What use are rank and riches if the fates are not
propitious ?

Or what are territories vast when subjects get
seditious ?

For reasons that have not transpired they slaughtered
him while sleeping,

And a bold and bad Usurper took the State into his
keeping.



(From an ancient Assyrian Slab.)

When revolutions happen in a region Asiatic,
They clean out heirs-apparent in a manner systematic.

The late king's sons and daughters with his nephews
and his nieces
Were by trusty Arab scimitars reduced to sundry
pieces.

The darlings of the harem and the lovely Maids of
Honour,

Found a less ungraceful exit with the aid of bella-
donna.

But their fathers and their uncles were despatched
with butcher's axes,

And the remnants floated seawards down that classic
stream Araxes.

Another twenty years rolled by ; repentance came in
season,

For the bold and bad Usurper's rule was worthy of his
treason.

The poor rate and the income tax increased to more
than double,

And the public baths and washhouses were always
causing trouble.

Again the tide of revolutions swept across the nation,
And trusty scimitars once more found lively occupa-
tion.

The bold Usurper shared the fate of some distin-
guished people,

And had his head erected on the summit of a steeple.

Then, just when public matters reached this critical
condition,

A charwoman of ninety made her dying deposition.

" 'Twas in the palace years ago I saved from would-be
seizer

One princelet of the royal race whose name is
Shakoneser.

" I rescued Shakoneser from the melancholy scrim-
mage

Determined to adopt and rear the little regal image.

And with the true devotion of an ancient highland
gillie

I hid him in a jar which had been labelled ' picallilli.'

" I bore him to my humble home in quite a state of
flutter

To think a royal prince was going to share my bread
and butter.

A funny notion struck me then—for like as is two
peas, sir,

Was my own youngest Merodab, and little Shak-
oneser.

" What I wanted was to puzzle the detectives who
came prying,

So I hit upon a very artful plan—there's no denying

I mixed the two—and now it's quite impossible for
me, sir,

To tell you which is Merodab and which is Shak-
oneser.

"On each the royal trade-mark—the double-headed
raven

(Without which none is genuine) you'll find it duly
graven.

I feel I overdid the job—'twould be a conscience-
easer

Could I tell you which was Merodab, and which was
Shakoneser."

She spake, and then her weary soul flew off to
heavenly splendour,

Bequeathing to the legatees two saucepans and a
fender,

Three silver spoons, a cuckoo clock, a wig, a lemon
squeezer,

And the problem which was Merodab and which was
Shakoneser.

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Innumerable messengers were sent to make inquiries

At the oracles of Hermes, Zeus, Apollo, or Osiris.

From Trophonius was brought this curiosity ap-
peaser—

"The one that is not Merodab is truly Shakoneser."

The best-esteemed philosophers were sought in due
rotation ;

They replied, "One certain factor we must have in
each equation,

Given this, to us no problem in quadratics is a teaser ;

But we don't know which is Merodab and which is
Shakoneser."

And so, an ancient race died out for want of a successor,

A loyal people lacked a duly qualified oppressor ;
For they never gained the privilege of shouting " Ave
Caesar ! "

Never found out which was Merodab and which was
Shakoneser.

No matter ! Let dull care depart ! Away with tears
and sighing !

The scythe of time hath cut the knot that was beyond
untying—

This palæolithic riddle needn't worry you and me,
sir,

For dead as nails is Merodab, and so is Shakoneser.

" One of the finest and most striking features in the poem," I remarked, " is the splendid and costly piece of engineering by which the river Araxes is carried through the middle of Asia Minor, and made to serve the double purpose of an undertaker and a rhyme for ' Axes.' "

" The whole get up of the poem is regardless of expense," said Higgins. " But isn't there some unnecessary bloodshed ? The morbid influence of the graveyard is too pronounced throughout. In the second verse we have a regicide. The third and fourth are devoted to wholesale slaughter. In the seventh verse another regicide occurs, and the eighth to the thirteenth verses describe a death-bed scene. In the seventeenth verse the news is broken to us that

the hero and his foster brother are both dead. And yet in the very same verse the poet in off-handed calousness states that all this is 'No matter,' and bids us jump for joy. This is quite out place. What we ought to do is to pause and shed a tear over the untimely end of each of these individuals and draw useful and improving lessons for our own moral guidance."

"I meant to have done so," replied the Artist. "But I ran short of rhymes for Shakoneser."

"And yet you have not used half the rhymes that you might have done," retorted Higgins. "A touching funeral oration might have been delivered in a chapel known as Ebenezer. The text might have been taken from the Codex Beza. Casual reference might be made to Tiglath Pilezer. But apart from all such matters which might be considered out of place, 'greaser,' 'sneezer,' 'tweezer,' 'freezer,' all deserve a chance, and in the hands of a man of genius would have got it."

"I should like to tell you the story of Mr. Briggs's umbrella," interposed the Photographer, "because it illustrates the opposite side of the question. If there are disadvantages in duplicated distinction, sometimes distinction pure and simple leads to disasters."

"Ten years ago Jonathan Briggs was one of the most promising of all the rising race of stockbrokers. He was methodical, enterprising, and had a good connection. Everybody prophesied great things of him. By this time he would have been well on the

way to making a considerable fortune but for that fatal fault—a love of originality in his personal appearance.

“So long as this fault only took the form of parti-coloured ties, and the wearing of artificial flowers in his button-hole, little notice was taken. But prudent people began to shake their heads when Briggs appeared in a blue silk skull-cap, instead of being content to go about Threadneedle Street in the orthodox bareheaded manner. Then came the umbrella.

“Briggs had lost several umbrellas. Some he left in the train; others at various eating-houses and offices. Some were borrowed by friends. So at last he got tired and decided to invent an umbrella which could not possibly be mistaken—that the whole city might get to know, and so he would secure the double advantage of protecting his property and a splendid advertisement.

“The umbrella was really something startling. The handle was a parrot’s head, beautifully carved. Round the neck was a plate, engraved with Mr. Briggs’s name and business address. In order that it might be recognised when in use, just above the ferrule there was a bulb of brass, like one of the turrets on the Alhambra.

“Briggs got very proud of his umbrella. It was illustrated in several of the weekly papers, and positively couldn’t get lost. Everybody knew it and identified the owner. Nobody dared steal it

because detection was certain. But by and by the drawbacks were discovered. Everybody got to know Briggs much too well. When the tax collector or the gas man called, it was no use saying that Briggs was not at home. They spotted the umbrella in the hall, and refused to leave till they were paid. And so he rapidly became poor.

“And then the time wasted in interviewing people who wanted to see him out of curiosity, autograph hunters and the like ; people who had invented patent umbrellas, and travellers who had new sorts of walking sticks, hat guards, eyeglasses, or even baby-carriages. There seemed no chance of his making his way while this went on. His hair became grey, and his clothes more threadbare every day.

“He determined to lose the umbrella. So he took it to a distant suburb and threw it over a garden wall. That night there was a burglary in the adjoining house. The detectives found Briggs’s umbrella, and the finger of suspicion was pointed against its owner.

“Again, he tried to get rid of it and buried it in the back yard. But the dog next door scratched it up again and left it in a dark passage, where a man stumbled over it and impaled himself on the spire. He brought a heavy action for damages against Briggs. To save himself from ruin the latter embarked for America with all the cash he could collect. He took his umbrella with him, and in

consequence his movements were tracked by the detectives. By the skin of his teeth he eluded them and reached Texas. Finally some Mexican bully shot him in a Durango bar because he said that a man with an umbrella like that made him feel ill."

CHAPTER XII.

THE HOLY ROOD OF BOXLEY.

OUR path as usual skirted the richly wooded slopes at the edge of the valley, and so we passed close by the church at Boxley, noted for its curious western porch. Lambard says that the village takes its name "from the Box trees which *peradventure* grew there." Would that a similar caution had always accompanied the statements of that highly imaginative father of Kentish guide-book writers! There are springs issuing from the chalk in this neighbourhood containing so much lime in solution that twigs and similar wooden articles can be petrified in less than three months.

With Boxley is connected one of those beautiful fables of my childhood which, with age and experience, I have had to reluctantly discard. When I was a boy at an old Kentish grammar school I was taught to believe that at the Abbey, whose meagre ruins are to be found a few hundred yards from the church, there was a famous image known as the Rood of Grace, from which an immense revenue was

derived. There were springs and subtle machinery within it, and these were employed to control the offering of the pilgrims. If a small coin was presented, the idol frowned in displeasure, and wagged its head; a shilling produced a nod; half-a-crown a pleasing smile; while for ten shillings, it might even be induced to spread out its hands and bless the lavish worshipper. I believed this implicitly till a tour in Mexico and Guatemala introduced me to the movable images still in vogue among the peasantry in those countries, and I learnt their purpose, partly as aids to a picturesque ceremonial, partly (like the serpent on which the Virgin treads in a church in Guatemala, and which opens its mouth and squeaks when its tail is pinched) for the amusement of a people still in a state of childhood. Doubts began to assail me, and these have since been confirmed by the efforts of the conscientious antiquaries who have waded through the ancient records. The Rood of Boxley was no very wonderful piece of mechanism; its motions were few and so simply obtained that the most careless person could not help detecting them. Hoker, the local authority, says that all its movements were controlled from outside. Its eyes were closed, and its arms made to hang down or cross on its breast, in order that it might be laid in a tomb on Good Friday and resume its ordinary posture on the Cross on Easter Day. One might as well attempt to conjure with an artist's lay figure, or a doctor's skeleton.

"But how do you dispose of the authorities who vouch for the impostures?" remonstrated the Artist. "It is not so easy to run down history with a new version. You have not explained the indignation of the populace on the discovery of the secret spring, or the Sermon at Paul's Cross."

"As to the authorities," I replied, "they disagree so completely, and, with the exception of Lambard, are nearly all so far from being contemporary, that little notice need be taken of them. I base my conclusion on the report of the Commissioners who abolished the Abbey and liberally pensioned the Abbot and his monks. The image was then exhibited at Maidstone, where it excited little attention. Some rewarded the zeal of the reformers with a guffaw, others were angry at the irreverence. It was only when it was taken to London and exhibited (after an exciting sermon) to people who were unacquainted with local facts that there was any desire of the populace to burn it as a deceitful idol."

"Country people are so awfully simple," objected the Artist. "Look at their superstitions at the present day."

"Country people are superstitious," I admitted. "But their superstition takes a different form. The rustic lives in the midst of Nature, and he is often overawed by its mysteries. To the end of the world he will find something uncanny in woods and streams and plants. Haunted ruins, holy wells, moonlight witchcraft, will always be found effective methods of

inducing a peasant to do that which he would otherwise be disinclined. Beyond these, the countryman is a strange mixture of cuteness and indifference. On any device of city manufacture he will look partly with suspicion, partly with a mild contemptuous toleration. Winking Madonnas or miraculous roods might make his mouth open—not his purse.”

“Neither of you fellows really understands the rustic character,” remarked Higgins. “I can give an instance to prove what it really is. A year or two ago I was stopping in a village not many miles from here. The first day a Church Association lecturer visited us and harangued at great length on the wickedness of the vicar who had just introduced some soul-destroying coloured stoles. In spite of flaming placards, and almost house-to-house canvassing, only seven people attended the lecture.

“Next day a van painted a flaming red colour bivouacked on the village green, and a Radical agitator tried his utmost to induce the labourers to form a local branch of his organisation. He told them that by voting for his candidate for Parliament they could secure healthier homes, double wages, unlimited allotments, and various other panaceas. The yokels listened and grinned. Nothing more. The prospect was too distant.

“Next Saturday a smartly dressed, loud-voiced bagman drove into the village in a stylish brougham. He had a medicine which would cure every possible ailment. If you drank it, measles, ague, small-pox,

rickets, jaundice, consumption, or heart disease instantly fled from the neighbourhood; used as an ointment, chilblains, bunions, corns, or rheumatics would trouble you no more; and it was also an infallible hair restorer, egg producer, and rat poison. There were several other miscellaneous virtues, one being that it would take the black marks off postage stamps so that they could be used again. That man disposed of every bottle in our one little village.

"The common or garden clodhopper," continued Higgins, "is a mixture of extreme meanness and crass stupidity. Only induce him to believe that there is any immediate gain to be got by it and he will swallow the most childish fraud. But if your image did not promise him profits cash down by return of post it might wag its head and goggle its eyes till the strings burst for all he would care."

"I can assure you," I replied, "that the monks never promised any benefits of this kind. Religious frauds there have been, perhaps, but not at Boxley. On the contrary, the Abbot was reprov'd by Archbishop Wareham for the poverty of his Abbey, he having let the estates at so low a rent that the income was insufficient for the maintenance of himself and nine monks.

"Fuller makes merry on another statue at Boxley—a kind of supplementary legend. This represented the 'mythical infant Rombauld, and although only eighteen inches high, and easily lifted by a child, became suddenly heavy enough to resist the efforts

of the strongest man if he was not in a state of grace. This, Fuller tells us, was accomplished by turning a peg, which fastened it to the floor."

"But how about the hole where the peg entered the statue?" interrupted the Boy.

Gentle youth, many a simple question like yours would dispose of fables much more subtly conceived than those at Boxley!

CHAPTER XIII.

DIGRESSIONS. ON ORDNANCE MAPS AND OTHER THINGS.

AT Debtling, "a barren place of chalky, stony soil,"¹ Higgins led the expedition several miles out of the way in quest of the mansion of a friend of his. He assured us that we were certain of an invitation to dinner. We reached the house only to discover that the proprietor had given orders, if any pilgrims called, to say that he had gone away for several weeks.

I remonstrated with Higgins, not merely for wasting our time on specious objects, but for giving rein to his appetite at this early stage. It seemed ridiculous to me that we should talk about dining when we had only yet accomplished about four miles towards the day's quota. I reminded him that we were due at Wye that evening, and that dinner ought not to be even thought of till we reached Lenham.

Higgins said it was absurd to say that we had only

¹ Although unfertile in soil, an ancient chronicle asserts that Debtling is prolific in twins.

done four miles. He appealed to the Ordnance map. By its measurements the distance completed appeared to be less than three and a half miles. Then he remembered his vow of the previous night, and, striking a match, he ignited the remains of the fatal chart and twisted it into pipe-lights.

Higgins' condemnation of the Ordnance map arose from his taking an unnecessarily extreme view of the situation. I once thought myself that these productions were intended as a guide to tourists, and to be regarded as accurate surveys of the country, and to settle disputes as to boundaries, and so on. Now I know that this is a delusion. I never met anybody who ever found his way to anywhere with the assistance of an Ordnance map. The task would be quite impossible even to one initiated into the cabalistic signs and figures which adorn it. You can easily prove this by examining the section supposed to represent a district with which you are perfectly acquainted. Try and find out some favourite route; you will soon be utterly bewildered as to whether some particular line is a footpath which you take for a short cut, or whether it is the high road, or merely a hedge or ditch, or the line of some extinct underground passage. It is all a riddle with no solution attached. No sanely constituted court of justice would accept such evidence.

But before your mind becomes unhinged and you resort to extreme measures, after the example of Higgins, I will explain to you the laudable principle

which governs the action of the Ordnance department. It is a great and glorious device of our military authorities, worthy of being classed with the grand military stratagems of Cæsar, Scipio, or King Alfred. Our War Office have an infallible provision secured against the time when a hostile army lands on the coast of Kent and commences the march upon London. *They will never get there*, because their route will be dictated by the Ordnance map. Lost in inextricable mazes, they will wander aimlessly hither and thither, their artillery sunk into some unmarked swamp, their men disorganised and half-starved in the search after inns which are not where they seem to be, the leaders demoralised and bewildered by the surprising alterations in the aspect of the country. Eventually they are sure to fall into ambush and be ignominiously captured or cut to pieces. No true Englishman ought to disparage or abuse the Ordnance map. Rather let him subscribe a fund for the distribution of specially bound and beautifully printed copies among all the nations of the world. The Ordnance map is a splendid institution—but not to guide your footsteps when engaged on a walking tour.

Higgins was in no way comforted by my explanations, and fell back on the plea that he was hungry. I might have ignored his proposal, but alas! he had appealed to the lower passions of the Photographer and the Boy, and I was outvoted. All I could do was protest against the encouragement of gourmand-

ising, especially on walking tours. Light refreshment is sufficient during the walking hours of the day, with a good square meal at the last stopping place before the journey is over. But Higgins thought differently. Then I resorted to stratagem, and with apparent reluctance moved a resolution that we should dine at the next inn. This was carried with acclamation, my opponents falling readily into



the trap. We ordered dinner at the next inn ; to the horror of Higgins bread and cheese were the only eatables obtainable ! I had stooped to conquer. An enormous cheese was placed before us, a very diminutive one left the table ; Higgins consoling himself in quantity for what the repast lacked in quality. A new beer cask was also needed before we departed, in spite of my admonitions in praise of moderation.

Later on we discovered the reason why Higgins

desired so frequent stoppages at every inn, and every possible excuse for a meal. We had long noticed that his slender frame was filling out perceptibly. This regularly increasing tendency was at first ascribed to a chest expanding under the influence of the pure breezes of the Kentish hills, and perhaps an accumulation of flesh from partaking so freely of good



country fare. But when symptoms of lassitude were superadded, closer observation revealed the true cause. Higgins was a confirmed relic-hunter! So insidiously had his operations been conducted that for a long time he excited no suspicions. Subsequently we required him to display his treasures for our admiration. Among the contents of various pockets were the following:—

1. A ginger-beer bottle containing water from St. Thomas' Well.

2. A bone turned up by the plough, supposed to have formerly belonged to either—(a) an ancient British warrior, (b) an Anglo-Saxon chieftain, (c) a prehistoric horse.

3. A piece of timber taken from one of the yew trees on the Pilgrims' Way.

4. A portion of the Stone Circle.

5. Ditto of the Druidical Altar.

6. Ditto of Kit's Coity House.

7. A jar of cherry brandy purchased at a wayside inn.

8. Sundry fossils and petrified leaves from Boxley.



To these he added at Wye a bag of eels caught by the miller, and some rabbits knocked down by our landlord. By this time he had assumed a sufficiently portly appearance.

When we parted finally from Higgins on the platform at Canterbury station, then he was a sight for all the world to gaze on aghast in speechless wonder. His person had become so rotund that his garments threatened to burst, and his pockets were

momentarily expected to discharge their superabundant treasures. From every available crevice peeped guide-books, pictures, photographs, rare plants, feathers and foliage. One hand grasped tightly a fish-basket, the other a brace of rabbits, while from under each arm an enormous pumpkin would occasionally endeavour to seek a securer



resting-place by slipping down with a thump on to the floor. There were many more objects of equal value in the luggage van, but of these, language fails in description.

This faculty for accumulation is not uncommon. How many of us in our pilgrimage through life amass a variety of quite unnecessary useless things which only encumber our heavenward path!

Higgins lost quite half of his curiosities during the journey to London. We shall one day have to leave all our lumber behind us, even though it be of precious metal and stamped with the image and superscription of our gracious Queen. As a noted preacher remarked, "We shall have no pockets in our shrouds."

I begin to understand now why those ancient

monuments, which the guide-books describe as so stupendous, prove so contemptibly small to the modern visitor. Even they could not bear the constant drain upon their resources to meet the craze of so many generations of collectors. If only three Higgins's visit Kit's Coity House each month, in fifty years they chip off quite a ton of material. The cromlech is at least two thousand years old, so that as we see it now it has lost at the lowest calculation forty tons of its original bulk. With the increased travelling facilities of modern times, the process has increased in rapidity. In another century all these priceless antiquities will be remembered chiefly by the illustrations which adorn this work.

CHAPTER XIV.

THURNHAM CASTLE.

A LOFTY mountain to be climbed immediately after lunch! This was impracticable and altogether beyond reason; but the Artist insisted on it, and a new energy seemed to be infused into Higgins when it was mentioned that there were ruins on the summit. I would fain rest awhile and take my ease, after my midday repast; as usual I was outvoted. A long weary ascent, first by a stony road, and then up the steep rough edges of the hillside. Of course I had to carry the bag; and the Boy struggled wearily with the camera, and vituperated all builders of abbeys with unmeasured scorn. No matter that it was a castle we were in search of. The Boy despises all such minute distinctions.

After a mile of upward progress, a shout proclaimed that the advanced guard had discovered something. It was a heap of picturesquely disposed roadstones. Higgins decided that this must be Thurnham Castle. So we photographed the Castle with Higgins reclining gracefully on the top, and

calculating how much brown paper and string would be required to make the Castle up into a neat parcel to be despatched by the next Carter Paterson for re-erection in his suburban garden.

Thurnham, or Goddard's Castle, was most likely a Roman speculatory, *i.e.*, reconnoitring station. It was never very large or complete, only having been designed as a slight protection to a force guarding the cross-road to Sittingbourne. The hill has been



cut away and artificially strengthened, and it commands a very extensive view in every direction.

The fresh breezes drove away our lassitude. We were boys once more. A proposal for a race down the hill, and a short cut across country, met with universal approval. Down we rushed, yelling and shouting, leaping from mound to knoll, and jumping gaily over bush and ditch. Then came a check to our onward career, for at a gate one of the sturdy men of Kent, with a dog, barred our onward progress.

We resorted to strategy and propitiated his hostility with twopence. From an uncompromising enemy he became a valuable ally and showed us how, by trespassing on a neighbour's fields, we could save nearly another mile.

To our great regret, loss of time forced us to abandon all ideas of visiting Leeds Castle, a splendid mediæval fortified palace on an island in the middle of a lake formed by the Len brook, and we could not even turn aside to inspect Hollingborne Church, with its memorials of the doughty cavalier warrior, Lord Colepepper, whose twelve daughters worked the altar cloths. These ladies form inviting heroines for a twelve-volume novel. Higgins very much wished to meditate (as the guide-books recommended) on the tomb of Lady Grace Gethin, but I reminded him that she had another tomb in Westminster Abbey, whereon he might go and meditate free of charge any Monday or Tuesday between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

The path still increased in wild luxuriant beauty. Nowhere else is the untended strip of land so broad or Nature so unfettered in her treatment of the banks and hedges on which she has laboured for more than two thousand years. Here and there we startled some drowsy rabbit, or a partridge would fly up simulating lameness to entice us far from the spot where its precious offspring were concealed.

"A country life is the only life worth living. A life spent in the green fields under the clear sunlight, the

destroyer of all disease germs in body and soul ; the life-giver whose rays cannot penetrate in their power into the pestiferous smoky atmosphere of our great cities. A life of early rising, regular hours of toil ; a restful life, free from the grasping anxieties which beset the Londoner. A life of colour and variety instead of the gloom and monotony of a smoky town. ["All the same, you would be glad to turn it up in a week," murmured Higgins.] For the countryman, Nature puts on all her transformations ; she presents him with a costly almanack, a book, a daily magazine, with living pages which none can number, writ with endless kinds of flowers, of beasts, song birds, reptiles and insects."

"And all having a definite purpose in life," interrupted the Artist, "namely, to devour one another."

"Perhaps you will explain this," remarked Higgins. "A Londoner at sixty is in the prime of life, erect and active. What is a country labourer like at that age? Bent double. A worn-out old man, generally half-witted and past any work but grave-digging."

"Country air is all very well for a change," said the Photographer ; "but it is too strong to live in, too rich in oxygen. It 'develops' too quickly."

The Boy considered that the air most conducive to longevity was that of sewers. Witness the scavengers who are always fine healthy-looking men and live to a fabulous old age. Witness also the sewer rat, the strongest and most active of all mammalia.

"Then again," continued Higgins, "how many

country-folk care about your Book of Nature? My uncle in the country doesn't know a missel thrush from a linnet, or a pimpernel from wood-sorrel. He can only distinguish partridges, rabbits and pheasants, because it is proper to shoot them. All naturalists are Londoners."

I am afraid Higgins is right. Nearly all the real observers of Nature are town bred. Old Gilbert White is almost the only exception I can recollect.

Perhaps the reason is that the looker-on always sees most of the game. For the countryman is involved in that vast scheme of Nature which, as the Artist truly observed, consists in causing everything to prey on something else. If we look closely into the scheme, we see that it is a system of vortices reacting curiously on one another. The aphid preys upon the rosebuds, the bluebottle gobbles up the aphides till at length he is caught and devoured by the spider. By and by the spider grows fat enough to form a tit-bit for the blackbird. Then the blackbird is murdered by the hawk, who, in turn (if he is not shot by a sportsman and palmed off on some unsuspecting London poulterer as a rook), is killed in a trap, and food for insects to start a new round is provided. Another series might be formed from the caterpillars and ichneumons, or from the snakes and the mice. And the highest vortex of all is formed by humanity itself. First the labourer digs and toils and tyrannises over grain and cattle till he has amassed a harvest; but this is not to be his own;

the farmer has marked him for his prey. But before the farmer can retire with his gains, the landlord must be reckoned with. Then comes the tax-collector and pillages the landlord. I am not quite sure who devours the tax-collector, but depend upon it, Nature has some provision to meet the case.

“Hobbes clearly proves that every creature
Is in a state of war by nature.
So naturalists observe a flea
Has smaller fleas that on him prey ;
And these have smaller still to bite 'em ;
And so proceed *ad infinitum*.”

Let others say what they will, the country life is the true life. And Nature has its sure and certain revenge on a people which allows agriculture to dwindle and decay. Hear Richard Jefferies :

“The wheat-fields are the battle-fields of the world. If not so openly invaded as of old time, the struggle between nations is still one for the ownership or for the control of corn. When Italy became a vineyard and could no more feed armies, slowly power slipped away, and the great empire of Rome split into many pieces. It has long been foreseen that if ever England is occupied with a great war, the question of our corn supply, so largely derived from abroad, will become a weighty matter. Each of us, in our voluntary and involuntary struggle for money, is really striving for those little grains of wheat that lie so lightly in the palm of the hand.

Corn is coin, and coin is corn, and whether it be a labourer in the field, who no sooner receives his weekly wage than he exchanges it for bread, or whether it be the financier in Lombard Street who loans millions, the object is really the same—wheat.

“All ends in the same: iron mines, coal mines, factories, furnaces, the counter, the desk—no one can live on iron, on coal, or cotton—the object is really sacks of wheat”

Higgins began again to develop symptoms of lassitude. Just then the Boy managed to stir up a wild bees' nest with his umbrella, and we fled the scene at a speed that soon brought us to the outskirts of Lenham.

CHAPTER XV.

LENHAM.

A RUDE little boy stationed himself in front of the camera at Lenham, with a view of becoming the most conspicuous portion of our picture of the quaint market-place. He was unaware of the resources of photography. We "exposed" without drawing the slide. The urchin was circumvented by this ruse, and ran off bursting with pride and glee to tell his mates that he had been photographed. Meanwhile, the slide cover was withdrawn, and a negative secured. Just outside one of the old half-timber houses, behind the colonnade of poplars, a man and a dog had posed themselves. We were glad that neither of these (and especially the dog) was



deceived by our stratagem. Within limits, we appreciate the addition of portraits of local celebrities, as they add interest and authenticity to our pictures. The sagacity of the dog formed an excuse for Higgins to relate a few anecdotes. But dog stories are so much overdone, that his imaginative efforts fell rather flat.

As a rule the dog is one of the least intelligent of animals—certainly he fails entirely in comparison



with the cat or the raven. He is docile and tractable, readily learning by heart any trick, if there is any reward promised. It need not necessarily be edible. A piece of wood or a stone will usually serve as effectual a temptation as a biscuit. If you are at table he is, of course, disappointed to find that he cannot chaw up or extract nourishment from the piece of boxwood for which you have required him to shake hands or beg ; but he will soon return to the charge.

The leading characteristic of the dog is the unchangeable persistence with which he will pursue some fixed idea. Like a systematic gambler, he backs that idea, regardless of repeated failure, introducing it on every possible occasion, knowing that the right concordance of circumstances must eventually come according to the rules of chance, when that mode of action will turn out trumps.

My dog at home bites every stranger who ventures into the back-yard ; no doubt with a vague idea that if he causes one trespasser to repent, there will be joy enough in my household to cover all the displeasure at the ninety and nine just persons who have to retreat hurriedly to the nearest chemist. Some collateral ancestor of this dog dwelt in some open prairie, where the grass was coarse and stiff : my dog obstinately continues to turn round three times whenever he wishes to repose on the soft, thick Turkey rug in front of the drawing-room fire.

Last summer a friend presented us with a tortoise. I don't know whether our dog had heard of turtle soup, or whether he regarded the creature as a new kind of bone that walked about ; but at any rate he determined to eat it. Whenever the Chelonian started out on a constitutional down the garden path, Gyp arrested it and carried it into his kennel, where he gnawed at the impenetrable armour till his jaws ached. The calm and philosophical manner in which the creature resumed his interrupted promenade irritated him exceedingly, but no failure

discouraged him. When we reminded him of its existence he would go in search all round the garden, peering into every crevice, till eventually tortoise was found and fresh attempts made to extract the meaty portions.

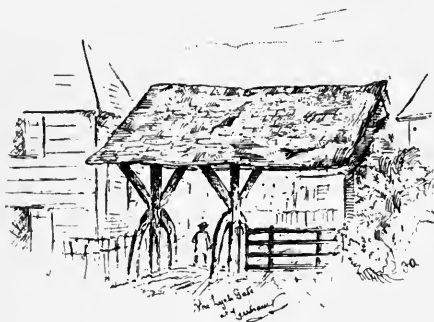
Winter came. The tortoise was forgotten and left out in the cold one frosty night. In the spring, while repairing the rockery, we found his corpse, half eaten by ants. And that dog, whom a piece of tainted meat or a saucer of stale milk would have despatched in instant search of the public analyst, munched the putrid members of the defunct with pretended gusto!

"I once knew a man named William Hunt," remarked the Photographer, "who possessed one of those long, ugly white dogs, a cross between a mastiff and a very disreputable terrier. Hunt never saw this dog without kicking it, and gave it a thrashing at least once a day. So the dog loved his master exceedingly, and was always found in his company, following him all over the town.

"Hunt is a commercial traveller, and every year has to go and get orders, collect debts, and so on for his employers in the North of England. He is away about three months. When the period of absence commenced the dog was inconsolable. He searched and sniffed in every corner of the house without success. He went round to the police court, no signs of his master there. He called at a neighbouring publichouse, having a suspicion that his master had eloped with one of the barmaids. No!

the staff was all complete. Then he went back home and spent the rest of the day in trying to figure the matter out.

"Another notion struck him. He bolted off to the churchyard and inspected all the graves. At last he came across one with an inscription to the memory of a William Hunt. It is true that the stone declared that this William Hunt had died in 1823, at the advanced age of ninety-eight, but that

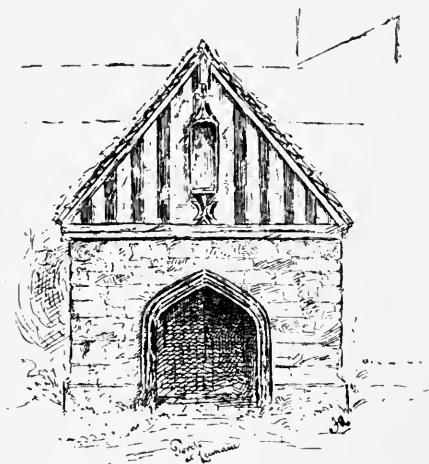


was a minor detail. He determined to haunt this stone. So he spent most of his time tidying up the grave, pulling up weeds, filching all the best wreaths from the other tombs to adorn it, or sitting up and chuckling over the statements about the virtues of the deceased.

"By and by, just as he had grown so fond of the monument, that he insisted on having his meals brought to him in the churchyard, his master returned. There never was a more disgusted dog. With one last growl of rage he sent all his painfully

amassed decorations flying, rushed out of the church-yard, and was engaged for four hours in mortal combat with a retriever that belonged to the sexton. Then he went mad, and bit the local sculptor. Next day he met the fate of all mad dogs."

A sad story if true. If not true, a story better untold, although it illustrates a very characteristic side of canine intelligence.



After a hearty "meat tea" we secured sketches of the curious lych gate and fifteenth-century porch of the church, and attended such portions of evening service as filtered out through the open windows. Then in the twilight we walked on to Charing, of which it was too dark to see much. The block on which St. John the Baptist was beheaded was formerly preserved in the church here.

It was clearly impossible for us to find our way over to Wye in the dark; so most reluctantly we had to resort to a train journey. While waiting for the train we picked up acquaintance with a young man, a resident of Folkestone, who had been on a visit to some friends near Charing. As he was supposed to start work at some unearthly hour the next morning, he had intended to have caught an early train, but had overslept himself. His sweetheart had induced him to accompany her to church, with the result that the midday train was just passing out of the station as he arrived breathless on the scene. His habit of leaving things to the last moment caused him to undergo the same unfortunate consequences with regard to a train that left at three o'clock. To prevent a recurrence of this disaster, he had been waiting on the platform for almost the whole evening. That made things fairly sure, he thought.

Just at the last moment our friend remembered something—a message he ought to have left with his young lady, only across the way, where you could hear the train coming—and so he left us.

The train was phenomenally punctual. We took our seats, the whistle sounded, and with a few gentle puffs from our iron steed we glided out of the station. A yell of rage caused us to look out of the carriage window. We beheld that unfortunate young man struggling frantically in the arms of a porter to secure his last chance of getting to Folkestone that

night. 'Twas all in vain. Like Lord Ullin, he was left lamenting.

Oh woman! woman! What have your seductive charms to answer for!

CHAPTER XVI.

IN CAMP AT WYE.

WYE is a decayed place. In Domesday Book it occupies a high position, the Manor then having



jurisdiction over twenty-two hundreds, the whole extent of the Lath of Scray. This high importance it retained down to the sixteenth century, since which

time it has been steadily decreasing. At the time of the Reformation it still possessed a weekly market. Leland describes it as a pleasant country town, but the market had ceased to be weekly. Now there is no market at all. This decay has been shared by its leading institutions. Only a fragment remains of the great cruciform church built by Archbishop Kemp, a native of the place; the college of priests became a country grammar school, which was a year or two ago abolished by the Lord of the Manor, and the long, low block of fifteenth-century buildings sold by him to the County Council for the purposes of an agricultural college. The Manor has been divided, and the population is now quite small.

The reason of this decay is not altogether easy to explain. Possibly the feeble and inane puns (such as the Boy has been indulging in) with regard to the name of the place had a discouraging effect on the inhabitants.

Once upon a time I was invited to assist in the production of a periodical which bore the high-sounding name of "Food." It was a journal of dietetic economy in all its branches. The duty entrusted to me was to work up the branches by interviewing authorities. Then it was that I found out an answer to Shakespeare's question: "What's in a name?" The name of "Food" was an incentive to a species of wit of far too widespread occurrence. People daily asked "If I had any food," or remarked that "my food didn't seem to agree with me," I being

of spare habit, or "that the paper looked as if it wanted feeding up." After I had heard these lively sallies a few thousand times, they ceased to evoke even a smile of toleration. I became disgusted, and in spite of the princely salary attached to the situation, I felt compelled to resign. But even the name of "Food" offers less temptation to the facile punster than that of Wye.

Why was it so called? Echo answers Why? Lambard, Philpott, Camden, and the rest of the gifted etymologists who have five or six equally plausible and unlikely derivations to account for every polysyllable name like Julieberrie or Appledore give up this little word as an insoluble conundrum. One or two of them have endeavoured to supply the long-felt want by imagining a Celtic root VVY, which meant wandering; but who it was that was wandering, whether it referred to the meandering course of the rippling Stour, or the inhabitants when going home late at night, or the philologists themselves, is not explained.

A native of the town, a rising medical authority, informs me that the following is the most probable solution. In the days of old there dwelt hard by the ancient bridge, with its moss-grown Gothic arches, a bold and mighty baron, whose name is supposed to have been Kennett. This valiant knight was wont to take toll of all comers. Every stranger was asked the question: "Where for?" If he was bound for Canterbury, then the knight bade him pass on, be-

cause he knew that pilgrims ought not to be delayed in the performance of their sacred duty ; besides, as a class, they are rarely overburdened with this world's goods. If he was not a pilgrim, then he was invited to stop and taste the excellent beer and the far-famed eel pies of the district, prices being varied according to the rank and fortune of the customer. So the



place came to be known as "Wherefore," and was so marked in the Ordnance maps of the period.

In the course of time centuries elapsed. The good knight was gathered to his fathers, and all his single-minded deeds of philanthropy were forgotten, although his descendants have not forgotten the recipe for brewing his matchless ale, and the mill-pond still rears the finest eels in all Kent. Then the age of guide-book writers dawned on this sphere, and

they came to Wherefore. It seemed a bombastic title for so small a place, so they shortened it to Wye, and ever since they have been trying to discover the reason why.

"Which is a parable," remarked the grizzled host of the "Flying Bull," as he drained a pint measure of the aforesaid ale in our honour. "And the moral is: Never ask questions beginning with 'Why.' Stick to facts."

But the vagaries of fortune have not disturbed the little town. Like a philosophical stockbroker who has failed in the conflict against bulls and bears, and has set up as a coal merchant and greengrocer, it has remained eminently respectable and has cut its coat to suit its cloth. There are no signs of ruin and desolation. You might think that the market had been given up because bartering and haggling disturbed the peace of its pleasant valley. It has consolidated itself into a smiling, happy village, to enjoy a *dolce far niente* amid the downs which shut out all unpleasant winds and just admit of soft, wholesome zephyrs—a valley of repose and contentment, where one may forget all the cares of a shouting, competitive world, with just the one excitement, when walking, fishing, and driving have exhausted their charms, of strolling down to the station to see who has arrived by the train.

Our programme for this day of rest had foreshadowed a time of continuous pleasure. In the early morning we would bathe where the stream

"Death of Ypres" which ravaged Flanders. Perhaps, if time and inclination allowed, we would go as far as Elmstead, where, in the last century, a subterranean coal seam took fire, to the amazement and terror of the natives. We would return *viâ* the quaint churchyard of Crundale and read the inscription to sundry individuals named Sutton, concluding thus :

" From this tombstone it doth appear
The Family of Sutton lieth here."

By way of a set-off the more artificial scenery at Ollanteigh, with its statue-decked gardens and Parisian waterfall, might be visited, although there would be no time to see the priceless curiosities within the mansion.

Many things turn out contrary to expectation, and it's always unlucky to anticipate.

Under the shadow of an old minster church a bright-eyed youngster was droning over his delectus, and as he sat on his bench in the shady cloister he speculated over the future which lay before him. It was his ambition to be a priest. Some day it would be his pride to stand before the altar, robed in costly vestures of purple and gold, and surrounded by a host of attendants ; when the notes of the pealing organ died away he would turn and give the blessing to the kneeling throng. His hands would offer the holy mysteries, and carry round the precious relics under a stately canopy. He would bear consolation

to the dying, or preach sermons to hold men spell-bound, and turn the sinner from wicked ways.

In his musing the youngster fell asleep. He dreamt a most dreadfully wicked dream, that he was an outlaw and a brigand—one who was always burning churches to the ground, defaming priceless relics, and cutting saintly hermits' throats from ear to ear. He woke in a cold sweat of horror, and ran to seek his confessor.

"My son," said this worthy man, kindly patting the child's curly head. "Dreams indicate more truly than all the self-examination in the world, the state of the soul. You are really engaged in murder. In fact, I know that you are the murderer of a priest."

"How can you say that, Father?" cried the boy, with mingled indignation and surprise. "You know very well I am incapable of such a terrible crime."

"Nevertheless," continued the monk, "I am right. You are murdering the priest you might otherwise yourself become. Only to-day, instead of doing your Latin exercise, you idled your time away in thinking how fine a thing it would be to perform the high offices of the priesthood. You have lost a day in the task of preparing yourself to be a priest, and moreover, while people build castles in the air, fate is stealing the foundations. Wait to enjoy the future when it comes; never anticipate anything but misfortune."

The young aspirant listened attentively to his preceptor, and earnestly promised amendment for the

future. In the ordinary course of things he would have become a most devout ecclesiastic, perhaps either Archbishop of Canterbury or Abbot of St. Albans. Only unfortunately all this happened in the reign of King Henry VIII., just a year before monasteries were abolished. The boy who was going to be a priest embarked as cabin-boy on a privateer vessel. Eventually he became a bold buccaneer, the right hand and boon companion of Sir Francis Drake, in whose company he ravaged the Spanish Main, and secured no end of plunder.

But the old monk was quite right. You cannot eat your goose and have it. If you take your pleasures in advance, you draw a bill on fortune to be repaid in misery.

We started forth gaily after breakfast, first visiting the famous well at Withersden, and sampling the water thereof. Matthew of Paris says, "St. Eustace (Abbot of Flai about 1200) here began his office of preaching; and in that place he blessed a spring, which in consequence was of such virtue, that from merely tasting it all distempers were cured. A dropsical woman implored help of the saint. 'Be confident, daughter,' said he, 'and go to your native fountain of Wye, which God hath blessed; drink, and you shall be well.' The woman did as she was directed, and immediately becoming sick, there issued from her mouth, in the sight of many, two large and black toads, which were soon changed into dogs, and afterwards into asses. The terrified woman screamed;

but he who kept the fountain sprinkled some of the water between her and them, and the monsters vanished into air."

The miraculous virtue of this well is undoubted. Since drinking of its water Higgins has been completely cured of his abominable habit of relating improbable episodes in the lives of his uncles.

Then we proceeded on our way towards Brook. When about half way drops of rain began to fall, shortly becoming a sharp shower. Our nearest shelter was at the "Honest Miller," and we took a short cut which I knew very well led to that house of retreat. Fields and stiles are not easily distinguished in the mist, and we had quite half an hour of circuitous journey through sloppy grass and mud before we reached the haven.

"Which is a parable," remarked our host of the "Flying Bull," when, during a lull of the storm, we returned to seek changes of raiment. "The moral being that it's very hard to find an Honest Miller."

Higgins reminded us how troublesome the flies had proved during the walk through the meadows to the bathing-place in the early morning—a sure sign of rainy weather. Our host said that this was likewise a parable, the moral being that it's easiest to be weatherwise after the event.

Drip, drip, drip. It rained all through that afternoon. We were perforce compelled to remain in the parlour of the "Flying Bull," listening to the landlord's narratives of the leading worthies of Wye. He

told us exactly the date of every inhabitant's birth, his full Christian name, his godfathers and godmothers, whom he married, how many children he had, and how each had been named, what became of each, and how they liked it; how they eventually were gathered to their fathers, their last words, and the inscriptions on their tombstones. Little anecdotes illustrating their peculiar failings were also judiciously introduced with considerable artistic effect.

Amongst other things he told us about a certain old house in Wye which is haunted. It formerly belonged to the wicked squire of the place, who foolishly blew out his brains in the cellar. In spite of repeated coats of whitewash the blood-stains on the ceiling still retain their ruddy hue. Every evening a procession of the wicked squire's five and twenty victims ascend and descend an ancient staircase (the staircase has been walled up, but they do not mind that). The door of the cellar where the tragedies took place is locked every night, but in the morning it is found wide open.

The wicked squire was buried near the cross-road in a vast vault constructed in accordance with his will, and fitted up with hot-water pipes—a provision which our landlord considered was unnecessary under the circumstances.

He also told us that there was a stout, middle-aged gentleman, legal by profession, who had relatives in the town. This gentleman comes down from London

every year, and his principal occupations during his holiday appear to be amateur poaching and bathing. Sometimes it rains, but this enterprising individual is by no means deterred from his diurnal immersion. He puts on a mackintosh and an umbrella. The mackintosh is laid on the ground, the clothes placed upon it and the umbrella over them. After his dip he dresses leisurely, defying the elements beneath his improvised shelter.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PILGRIMS WEIGHED.

THE rain left off during the afternoon, but we felt some embarrassment about leaving the protecting shelter of the "Flying Bull." In a village like Wye a stranger is the cynosure of all eyes. Our own proper garments were not yet dry, and the five suits, borrowed by our landlord from various neighbours and acquaintances, were not by any means a perfect fit.

A modest man like myself has some qualms regarding a walk down the main thoroughfare (officially known as Bridge Street) in a frock coat, the tails of which scarcely fall below the waistcoat, and a pair of continuations requiring their last six inches tucked up, capacious enough withal to smuggle two or three skins of brandy, or half a dozen pounds of tobacco, without greatly incommoding the wearer. Just consider the dangers of the route. In the first cottage on the right-hand side lives a family of particularly inquisitive females. They are always at the window, and to stare at pilgrims seems at present

their chief object in life. The eldest daughter, a pretty, dark-eyed lass of sixteen, cranes her head out directly we appear in sight, popping it in with a blush as we pass ; out she comes again directly afterwards,



and she and her younger sisters study back views till we disappear round the corner. Further on there is an old man smoking a pipe at his doorstep, who invariably informs us that it is a fine day. Then several more doors open with the regularity of clockwork to allow the inmates to feast their eyes on our good looks and make more or less favourable estimates of our morals. Stillworse is the chemist's parrot ; his remarks are usually more lucid than agreeable. Then people whom you know, or who

know you, are sure to be coming to or from the station. These last are the worst of all.

So we waited till the evening, by which time our legitimate and orthodox garb had been thoroughly dried and well brushed. And then it was that we

took ourselves to the railway station, which is to every English country place possessing no market as fashionable a resort as an Eastern bazaar. Here we acquired a most remarkable testimony as to the salubrity of Kentish air and Kentish fare.

Before leaving town we were weighed on the automatic machine at Holborn Station. These were the results :

				st.	lbs.
The Boy	...	...	...	9	3
Photographer	...	...	...	9	4
Artist...	...	...	...	9	11
Higgins	...	...	...	10	3
Reviewer	...	...	...	10	7

Compare the following figures registered on the official luggage weighing apparatus of the South Eastern Railway, Wye Station :

				st.	lbs.
The Boy	...	...	...	11	10
The Photographer	...	...	...	12	2
The Artist	...	...	...	12	7
Higgins	...	...	...	17	10
The Reviewer	...	...	...	13	3

Figures cannot lie. In three days each of us had acquired upwards of thirty-five pounds of solid flesh and muscle. The abnormal increase of weight in the case of Higgins was partially due to the quantity of relics contained in his various pockets. But the facts are startling indeed ! Thirty-five pounds in three days ! That means eleven pounds five ounces a day,

or, say, seventy pounds a week. So that if our pilgrimage had lasted a year of fifty-two weeks (omitting Sundays) we should have each acquired an additional weight of a ton and a half!

But even this is not an accurate estimate. In three days I had put on a quarter of my previous weight. In a week the increase would have been a half. Thenceforward the progression ought to be represented geometrically, because the new flesh and bone would itself be an active factor in the proportionate increase. I sent this problem to a learned Cambridge professor of mathematics and asked him to work it out for me. After about a fortnight I received the following reply:—

“DEAR MR. REVIEWER,—I hope you will abandon any idea of prolonging your pilgrimage for a whole year. Assuming your premises to be correct, your total weight at the end of that period would be 287,526,985 tons, 19 cwt., 71 lbs. The presence of such a body moving promiscuously over the surface of the earth would be little short of disastrous. It would seriously impede the rotation of the globe, and heaven only knows what would happen regarding the precession of the Equinoxes! Abandon the idea, there's a good fellow.

“As to your friend Higgins, his volume would exceed that of the planet Jupiter.

“With congratulations on your delightful tour,

“Yours sincerely,

“A. T——N.”

In deference to my dear old tutor's wishes I abandoned the idea. Not that any such course was essential, because Nature has provided a beautiful method of compensation.

A friend, on whose word I can safely rely, states that he was weighed on the same machine at Wye Station, and found to be about fifteen stone. On reaching Charing Cross he registered on the automatic machine there 12 st. 10 lb. Which proves that whatever addition the human body gains on the way to the place of pilgrimage it loses during the journey back.

Higgins said that there were many phenomena concerning the weight of the human body under varying conditions that had not yet been properly explained. One day to prove a wager he weighed himself on an automatic machine at King's Cross Station. To his horror it only indicated something under nine stone. He had been feeling unwell for some days. Some insidious wasting disease must have been the cause, and he determined to go straight home and put himself under medical treatment. Before getting into the train he was weighed again at Ludgate Hill. In the few minutes he had lost another three or four pounds ! During the journey he brooded over his trouble so much that he had scarcely strength to crawl down the steps. At this rate he was not going to last for many hours. Dissolution was nigh. It was sad to be cut off thus in the midst of his youth ; and when he remembered

that pay day was only three days off, and that he was not to live to see it, his heart waxed heavy with sorrow. So heavy that on inserting his penny into the machine outside the tobacconist's at the corner, over twelve hundredweight was reached at the point when the spring broke, and the hands went whirling round the dial at seventy revolutions per second.

There were other machines in the station for the automatic supply of sweetmeats. I regret to have to chronicle the melancholy fact that some of the pilgrims resorted to them with avidity. They seemed to enjoy these childish dainties. With a sigh I left them and returned to the "Flying Bull."

The tap-room was full of labourers enjoying a friendly pipe and chat after the day's toil. I judged that either the "Flying Bull" is patronised by a select company, or else that the country bumpkin is becoming extinct in the district. The men might in intelligence compare with the best class of London artisans. Perhaps school-boards and newspapers have something to do with it; but most of all, probably, the railway. Many of them had served in the army and the police. A kind of spelling-bee was in progress. A middle-aged, sharp-featured wight of the name of Samuel had challenged the company to spell a certain word.

"He means 'physick,'" said one.

"No, I don't mean 'physick,'" replied Sam. "I mean 'ptizick,'"

"Then I bet it's spelt t-i-z-i-c," cried another.

"No use, Walter," exclaimed a third. "Sam's just made up the word to puzzle us."

"I bet drinks all round," cried Walter. "And I appeal to Mr. Reviewer."

My reputation was at stake. To tell the truth I never had heard of the word. But I looked at the stalwart form of Walter. I also considered his financial stability in the event of his losing. And in the end decided to give a verdict in his favour.

"I bow to the chair," said Samuel, amiably. "But I always spell it myself p-t-z-i-c-k."

"Go on with your nonsense," roared the landlord. "You know very well, Sam, you've just made the word up. Which is a parable. The moral being, we all know Samuel."

"Wait a bit," chuckled Samuel, quietly. "Now, I'll tell you what I mean by the word ptizick. It is the pipe in a man's throat down which all the liquids go. Just at the back of your palate there is a valve which divides the throat into two channels. Down one goes all you eat, down the other all you drink. Ah! I've seen many a man's ptizick when I was in the dissecting-room at the Barnmouth hospital."

"Gammon!" grunted Walter.

"I can tell you a very queer experience I had, sir," continued Samuel, "which this word ptizick calls to mind. When I was waiting on Dr. Horley at Barnmouth hospital one day we had the body of a man to dissect. He had died the day before of a lung

disease ; the doctors were not quite sure on some point, and wanted to examine him carefully.

"Well, sir, we got the body nicely laid out on the marble slab when the doctor was called away for a minute or two. He asked me meanwhile to get him a glass of stout. These hospital doctors ain't very nice in their ways.

"I put the stout on the slab all ready for the doctor, and then I went into the next room to get the instruments and set them ready. Next minute when I came back the glass was empty. The doctor accused me of drinking it."

"I bet he was right," murmured Walter.

"He was wrong," said Samuel, gravely. "Now comes the strange thing. When we cut the dead man up we found the stout in his ptizick. Strange, wasn't it?"

"Closing time," shouted the landlord. "Good-night all of you. And, Sam, I won't say as your story isn't gospel truth, but when I meet a bigger liar than you, I'll have him framed!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

EN ROUTE ONCE MORE.

FOR the first time I succeeded in rousing the Pilgrims before eight o'clock. An early bathe, a hurried breakfast, and again we are on the tramp. We are due at twelve o'clock at Canterbury to meet an appointment that Higgins has arranged with one of the Canons of the Cathedral. Fortunately the day is clear and bright. Briskly we stepped up the hill, stopping to take a view of the cruciform fourteenth-century church at Boughton Aluph, the finest exterior that we had yet seen, and happily not yet much injured by restoration. This large and beautiful temple is seldom used, the living being united with the neighbouring one of Eastwell. Church life has yet to make its influence felt in this part of Kent and pluralities are still tolerated, though matters show some improvement compared with a hundred years ago when one, Philip Parsons, combined in one

individual, the Rector of Eastwell, the Rector of Snave, ten miles distant, the Curate of Wye, and the Master of the Wye Grammar School. With what success history deponeth not.

The Boy remarked that this man was rightly named "Parsons."

After passing Boughton Church we left the road



and turned to the right through an abandoned lime quarry, and over the hills; through woods and copses where trees and bushes overhung and hedged in our path; here and there a glade with an occasional peep over the Wye valley across to the park at Ollanteigh, descending at length to the river at Godmersham.

Godmersham Church is well known by the pictures "Before and After Restoration," that we were all

familiar with twenty years ago. Fortunately those two decades have toned down some of the crispness ; ivy has begun to cover up and conceal the trimness of the roofs and the cast-iron French-looking iron finials. These triumphs of pseudo-Gothicism are all very well occasionally. Since then, the ideas of ecclesiologists have toned down much more rapidly than their creations.



But we must hurry on, with one last lingering look on a beautiful old-fashioned house covered with creeper, and with grounds sloping down to the river. Through the rich meadows we must hasten till we get our first glimpse of the ivy-grown keep of Chilham Castle. I wanted to rest on an old plank bridge over the broadening river, and watch the shoals of carp and tench at play in the transparent shallows.

Higgins is in such a hurry. What care I for canons, when I can rest and bask in the sunshine and listen to the murmur of the stream over the weeds and stones?

Chilham and the neighbouring "Juliber's Grave" (a mound on the Downs 180 feet long, seven or eight feet high, and about forty-five feet broad) have formed a splendid field for the antiquarian etymologist to dogmatise over. According to some, Caesar's fleet landed here, and the battle at which one of his tribunes was killed (referred to in the "Commentaries") took place in the attack on the Castle mound. So the place was called Juliham, and the tribune Julius Laberius was buried in the barrow, corrupted by the natives into "Julieberrie." By others it has been pronounced to have once been the domain of a Saxon hero named Cilla, and his grave was entitled "Cillabyrig." An earl of Winchilsea in the last century explored the tumulus and found nothing—not even an empty meat can or palæolithic newspaper to record the original builders. So Philpott, with a masterly effort of his peculiar genius, declares that Chilham means simply the "chilly place." He does not say what Julieberrie means, but perhaps it was a sort of echo—an elevated spot on which the stranger stood and remarked: "Chilly, yes, very!"

Chilham seems to have been at one time a centre of the wool trade which was common in the Middle Ages in this part of Kent. At least so I judge from



New Square Philadelphia

the curious, foreign-looking "square" resembling very much that we noticed at Lenham, and also from the name of the leading tavern. Most picturesque is this centre of the little town with the entrance to Sir Dudley Digges' Jacobean castle one side, the church at the opposite end, and the remainder of the quaintest half-timbered gabled houses imaginable, reminding us very much of Cranbrook, the centre of Flemish emigration into the Weald of Kent. Nearly every building in the place is a study in this kind of architecture. The castle at the extremity of the hill is full of Roman remains, and is supposed to have been the residence of King Lucius, the founder of Canterbury Cathedral. All except the grand Norman Keep was rebuilt by Sir Dudley Digges, the famous minister to King James I. You can read an excellent and extensive biography of this gentleman on his tomb in the church.

One little tribute to his memory shows that his character was not without its streak of humour. A clause in his will ordained that every year races should be held in the field known as "Old Wives Lees," between maidens and bachelors aged from sixteen to twenty-four years. The youth who won was expected to marry the fleetest lass, and was provided with a suitable dowry.

From this church another illustration of the senseless barbarism of maniacs termed "restorers" may be drawn. The north chancel was in the form of a Roman columbarium containing circles for inscrip-

tions instead of urn niches. This "monstrosity" has been lately pulled down and a commonplace aisle in pseudo-Gothic substituted. The Artist vented his indignation in the form of a story.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE WEST FRONT OF TOWCESTER CATHEDRAL.

A Legend.

IT was in the year Anno Domini 1285, at exactly the hour of none, on the feast of St. Michael that the Norman West Tower of the Towcester Minster fell with a loud crash.

Great was the dismay of the Dean and Chapter, who had just exhausted all their funds in the rebuilding of the nave and choir. They had hoped that the old west front would have lasted for a generation better able to afford the expense of erecting a new one. And now, in their poverty, the work of rebuilding was forced upon them.

Still, in their time of need, friends came nobly to their aid. The good people of Towcester were proud of their Cathedral. Those who had money gave it; those who possessed forests or quarries sent loads of wood and stone; while those who had neither land nor substance gave their labour cheerfully. And the

King himself, hearing of the distress of the good Canons of Towcester, sent not only money, but skilled workmen, under the charge of one Arnold of Mottingham.

And so by the self-denial of the faithful, and the blessing of our Lady of Towcester, the work prospered. Above the deeply-recessed porches rose the tiers of saints in their canopied niches, and above these again rose the great West Window, flanked by the huge buttresses, and the bold outlines of the western transepts. High above all soared the lofty pinnacles and the pointed gables. Truly it was a sight of wondrous beauty, surpassing all that had been seen in the West country. Of all the many works that the great architect, Arnold of Mottingham, had undertaken, the west front of Towcester was declared to be the crowning glory.

Soon after the work was ended Arnold of Mottingham died. His body was laid under a stone in the western aisle, and his soul was wafted to paradise. He had ever been a man of pious life. His tithes and Church dues were always paid promptly, nor was his commission ever overcharged, nor any bad foundations or defective masonry to be found in all his buildings. Moreover every one of the seventeen chantry priests of Towcester said a mass for the repose of his soul without requiring any payment. So he entered the realm of the blessed with good credentials. And at his earnest request a special favour was granted to him, viz., that every hundred

years he might revisit the earth, and see how his works were getting on.

In the year 1367 a peal of bells was presented to Towcester Cathedral, and the central tower not being strong enough, a new belfry tower was erected on the south side of the western front. When on Christmas Day, 1390, our architect had an opportunity of inspecting the addition he remarked :—

“This is not quite the way I should have gone to work. Still it is good work, and in no way detracts from the general effect.”

Nor was he displeased when in the next century he found a kind of porch or chapel had been added in advance of the central door. It helped to give scale to the vast mass above.

With the next century came the Reformation, and Arnold of Mottingham's statues were pulled down and the niches left empty and defaced.

“Never mind,” he soliloquised ; “ sooner or later a revival will take place and put it all right again.”

Still this revival had not taken place when he revisited his work in 1690. On the contrary, Cromwell's soldiers had wrought still worse havoc. In smashing the stained glass in the western window, they had also destroyed most of the tracery and delicate sculpture.

In the eighteenth century some kind of restoration took place. The empty niches were refilled with stucco statues, and the tracery and foliage were replaced in the best style available at the period.

"Very poor," sighed the shade of Arnold of Mottingham. "Still no antiquary well instructed in thirteenth-century architecture will fail in distinguishing what remains of my work, and what has been added."

Then came the nineteenth century, the age when all the glorious temples of our land, disfigured by time, neglect, or injudicious repairs, are to be restored to their original beauty. In due course, the restoration movement reached Towcester. A vast sum of money was collected, and the great architect, Mr. Adolphus Square, R.A., F.R.I.B.A., was requested to investigate and report. A lecture was delivered by that learned individual in the Town Hall, and we may extract one paragraph from the report that appeared in the *Towcester Mercury*:—

"Our aim, then, must be to endeavour to resuscitate—to dig out, as it were, from beneath the sands of time—that west front as designed by Arnold Mottingham, of which we read in the chronicles of Thomas the Towcestrian: 'In all the Western region,' he declares in his quaint Monkish Latin, 'there was none like that of Towcester. And I doubt, indeed, that even can be found in Suessones or Amiens that which can surpass it in dignity.' Now, what I wish to call your special attention to is the reference to Soissons and Amiens. There are ten years of Arnold Mottingham's life of which we know nothing. May I ask if it is improbable that he spent this

period in visiting the glorious minsters that were rising throughout Northern France. Where did the old monk Thomas learn to talk about Soissons and Amiens, when he had never travelled six miles out of his native place? I contend he learnt of them because he was the boon companion of Arnold Mottingham. (Cheers.) What more natural, then, than that Arnold Mottingham, fresh from his Continental studies, should build here at Towcester a west front on these lines, the bold conception of which naturally gave it a dignity beyond the designs of less-travelled brethren. And here we enter on something beyond conjecture. Here is a fragment of the Towcester string-course; here again one of the capitals from the great window. Compare it with these photographs of string-courses at Senlis and Rouen, and these capitals from Notre Dame at Paris. We find nothing like it in England. They are distinctly French. (Uproarious applause.)”

And so on. Of course the learned architect was not aware that the one skilled mason employed on the repairs in the last century happened to be a Frenchman, and a fairly intelligent student of ancient work.

Mr. Adolphus Square prepared a design for the restoration. It was very carefully executed by a well-known contractor for restoration work. Some uncharitable critics, it is true, objected that it was rather too close a copy of Rheims, with a much too piquant flavour of Coutances.

There was a grand public dinner in the Town Hall on the night after the consecration. Again we are indebted to the *Towcester Mercury* for an extract from the speech of the Lord Bishop of the Diocese in proposing the health of Mr. Adolphus Square :—

“Here in the town of Towcester,” remarked his Lordship, “we have been enabled to witness one of the miracles of modern research. Our old west front—battered by the zealot, smashed to pieces by the iconoclast, patched up and disfigured by the barbarian—seemed to be a thing of the past. Yet here it appears again at the magical word of our talented friend in all its pristine glory. This is a day ‘*Notanda meliore lapillo*,’ for the diocese, for the Dean and Chapter, and for Mr. Adolphus Square himself. And, perhaps—we hardly dare suggest it—perhaps the shade of that great genius, who originally designed and carried out this grand work, has been in our midst to-day. Ah ! if this be so, what a proud day it must be for him !”

And, meanwhile, where was the shade of Arnold of Mottingham ? He had been in that stately throng that day. He had seen the white stone all carefully scraped and cleaned. He had inspected the new work with its Frenchified carvings and its imitation of thirteenth-century mason marks. And now he was speeding back to paradise as fast as angel wings would carry him.

"What, back already?" cried his brethren, crowding around him.

"Yes, I have come back," he replied, sadly ; "and for ever ! My little hall in London has been burnt down, and a publichouse built on the site ; the church at Bristol has been turned into a railway-station ; and as to Towcester—I will think no more of it. My reputation is for ever gone. I am no longer an architect, only a base copyist of things I never saw, or ever wished to see. Henceforth, I will turn my thoughts to things above, for all that is earthly must pass away as an empty dream."

CHAPTER XX.

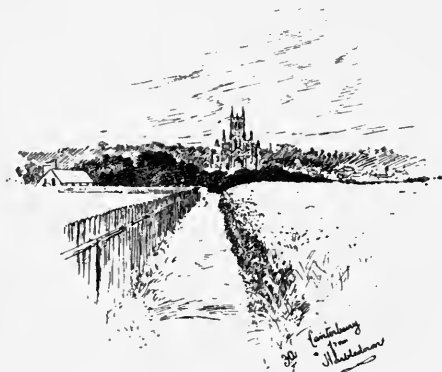
IN WHICH WE ARRIVE.

WE were on the crest of Harbledown Hill. An old gipsy woman told us that it was so called because of the footsore pilgrims that used to hobble down it. The great mass of the Cathedral and its three towers shone in the noontide sky like a giant rejoicing in his strength. It was a quarter to twelve, and Higgins warned us that if we did not hurry we should experience fulminations from the Canon. We could not even stay to call at the hospital and request permission to kiss the famous shoe of St. Thomas and be sprinkled by a Brother with holy water. Onward we hastened through the West Gate and into the old High Street with its rambling lattice windows and projecting fronts.

Why is the city so gay to-day, with bunting everywhere, flags of all colours hanging across the streets, and "Welcome" in white letters on a red ground over every arch? We heard the strains of a brass band. Evidently we were expected. The Canon must have divulged the secret that the first battalion of a new series of pilgrimages will arrive

to-day. We are in for a good thing! We swelled with proper pride. There is sure to be a civic banquet. Higgins is sorry he did not bring his dress-suit.

Just as I had mentally composed a suitable reply to the illuminated address, that wretched Boy remembered that this was the second day of the Canterbury Cricket Week.



Perhaps it is better there are no speeches or banquets. We are plain people and hate unnecessary fuss. With such philosophical consolations we send Higgins forward to announce our arrival to the Canon. Another disappointment! The Canon is not at home.

But, of course, this is only natural. He fears that we shall arrogantly assume on our importance, and means to be a few minutes late so as to allow us to realise his own dignity. This is only correct form in

an ecclesiastic of high rank. We contentedly secure possession of a claim amid the host of amateur photographers who are "taking" the Cathedral from every point of view.

At intervals we depute Higgins to inquire after the Canon. One o'clock arrives without any fruitful result; 1.30, and then a message to the effect that the Canon has forgotten the appointment. Would we make another? Saturday afternoon preferred. As for the bones of St. Thomas, which we had toiled so wearily and braved so many dangers to see, they had been replaced in their tomb and soldered up under a heavy stone slab. Words cannot express our feelings of disgust and disappointment.

But Canon or no Canon, we would faithfully perform our duties as pilgrims. And we entered the Cathedral, only to encounter the worst imposition of all.

I have visited many of the great Continental churches. At Amiens, Antwerp, Louvain, St. Omer, and Malines, I have wandered unrestrained amid priceless treasures of art. I have ventured without rebuke amid the array of jewelled madonnas, golden reliquaries, candlesticks, monstrances, and the like, and have been trusted. No one has followed me with suspicious looks, nor has any guardian at all been considered necessary. Above all—except when I have required the removal of curtains or the opening of doors which preserve the pictures of the old masters—I have never been expected to pay a single centime.

At Canterbury, high gates bar the way to everything eastward of the nave, and a printed notice informs all whom it may concern that each pilgrim must place a silver coin in the adjacent box "in the presence of a verger" before those gates will be opened. Now, there is no statement to the effect that there is anything to be seen worth seeing. In the very laconic nature of the notice lurks the artfulness of the imposition. It excites so much curiosity. What can there be that such massive barriers are necessary to protect? Is it possible that Henry VIIIth's Commissioners overlooked something? May it even be that some of the shelves of bones and relics that aroused such mingled sentiment in Erasmus are still in existence? Perhaps they can still show us the arm of St. George or the earth from which Adam was made. We pay our five sixpences, and, with the rest of the crowd of sightseers, are treated to some guide-book gabble and see a few naked chapels and third-rate monuments. Nothing else!

And yet there is just one sight to see—the Chapel of the Shrine, vacant and desolate as it is with the marks of the ruthless destroyer still visible on its broken pavement. The flight of steps worn away by the knees of endless successors of pilgrims lead to nothing: an effect as dramatic as were the courts of the temple enshrining a Holy of Holies, where the Roman Conqueror found no deity.

If I may use the comparison in reverence, there is

only one place in Christendom more solemn and touching—the three holes in the rock at the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre. That vacancy has its deep lesson to the thinking man. It recalls the inscription in the corner of St. Paul's Cathedral, "*Si monumentum requiris, circumspice.*" How vain was the fury of the Tudor despot when he decreed that every memorial of St. Thomas à Becket should be burnt and scattered, that his name should be removed from every calendar, and that every antiphon in his honour should be expunged from the Service Books!

The memorial of a great man is not in storied urn or illuminated biography. His fame is sure as long as his work is good and endures. When we honour Thomas à Becket, we need not think of the ascetic monk or the zealous champion of clerical ascendancy. We can afford to leave unnoticed any miracles that might (or might not) have been wrought by kneeling before his fractured skull, or kissing his vermin-stained hair shirt. His memory is distinctly unsectarian. We can all honour the son of the simple Cheapside merchant, who, though not a noble by birth, could break through feudal barriers and become the highest minister of the kingdom. We can all pay our tribute to the first Englishman who dared to dispute the absolute power of the monarch, who first ventured to deny the axiom that "the king could do no wrong." The Tory owes to St. Thomas the first inception of the English Constitution which he considers so perfect; the Radical, with his dreams

of ending or amending the House of Lords, may thank St. Thomas of Canterbury for striking the first blow at caste privileges.

I wanted to sit down, after the crowd had passed by, and muse upon all these things, but a remorseless verger moved me on. I do not think it was (as the Boy suggested) because he suspected that I harboured any intention of stealing the Cathedral. No! it was not that. *He was afraid that I was going to pray.* And it is very much contrary to the rules in Canterbury Cathedral to pray, except during the hours appointed for Divine service.

We were not in the mood to tolerate any more of the guide's ramblings, and after a peep into the chapel of the Martyrdom, we slipped out through a side gate (fortunately left open by a party in advance) and found there was just time to see Higgins off by a fast train.

Here endeth the Pilgrimage.

THE EPILOGUE.

CONTRIBUTED BY HIGGINS.

NOT so fast, Mr. Reviewer! Fair play's a jewel. "Quousque tandem? Audi alteram partem!" Your narrative must not be presented to a discriminating public until a much-attacked and long-suffering individual has been allowed an opportunity to clear his character. At the eleventh hour the publisher has placed this opportunity at the disposal of William Henry Higgins.

Throughout the book one person has been held up to consistent reprobation and ridicule—Myself. One person's schemes are always absurd, and come to nought—Mine. One person the historian invariably chooses to moralise over—Me.

Gentle reader, favour me with your courteous attention. All the absurd and ridiculous schemes are mine. The Reviewer's plans are always soundly contrived and successful. He omits to tell you of the number of times we were led astray into *culs de sac* by the pretence that he knew every inch of

the country. He draws a veil over the wanderings through the unlit streets of Wye until nearly midnight in search of lodgings—all because his arrangements were defective.

When he is tired of recounting my unsuccessful devices, he accuses me of inordinate voracity. Permit me to inform you that this apostle of temperance ate and drank nearly twice as much as any three of his companions, although he never omitted to season our banquets with an exhortation against excess. At Thurnham he was so overcome by his exertions at table that he was unable to climb the hill without assistance. He has glossed most hypocritically over this episode.

One day during our excursion he declared that our habit of stopping at every inn for refreshment was distasteful to him. With this unkind reflection on his comrades, he walked forward in company with the Artist at a rapid rate, leaving us impeded with the baggage. Shortly afterwards the Photographer complained of feeling quite faint. His throat was parched and feverish. I espied a little publichouse not far off, and agreed to lead him thither and beg for a glass of water. On knocking at the door, a gruff and familiar voice greeted us with, "No tramps wanted here." Nevertheless, I entered. There sat our Artist and Reviewer opposite two immense tankards. Comment is needless.

The most pointless and impossible stories are fathered upon me. As a matter of fact I told some

very good stories, many of them partially true. These are either ascribed to the Reviewer, or ignored altogether.

I might fill many pages with equally curious sidelights into the character of our Reviewer as a truthful chronicler ; but there is only space remaining for one revelation of a most terrible and astounding nature.

When we agreed to rally under his banner we believed that the intention was a demonstration to a callous and unreasoning world—a glorious revival of privileges that had been long forgotten. We were never more mistaken. The pilgrimage was only a cloak under which this worthy was masquerading. I am now about to tear off the mask. His real purpose shall now be disclosed, in an account of his proceedings after the train had left him standing waving his last parting salutations on the platform.

[The Publisher regrets that he cannot see his way to print the sixty-five pages in which Mr. Higgins recounts the subsequent adventures of an eminent individual. He is deterred not only by want of space, but also by a rooted conviction that the Epilogue to a Pilgrimage should differ considerably from a cheap novelette. The nature of the Reviewer's aspirations and their success can be sufficiently inferred from the concluding paragraph, which has been spared accordingly.]

Along the Pilgrim's Way of the ages, two souls will henceforth walk in company. May their path be as free from care and as full of wholesome pleasure as that which we five journeyed on to Canterbury !



APPENDIX.

I.

THE REVIEWER RETALIATES.

FROM the very first inception of this work I knew Higgins had made up his mind to contribute some portion. Indeed, he volunteered his collaboration and undertook the task of looking up authorities. One October morning, having sent word to the office that he felt unwell, he wended his way to the British Museum reading-room, and ordered a series of useful books on the topography of Kent. It may have been due to the depression and awful loneliness that assail every man who attempts to do any work in the British Museum Library ; it may have been that the presence of so much learning unhinged his mind for the time being ; perhaps it was only the ordinary vacillation and change of purpose characteristic of Higgins. At any rate, that evening I received two half sheets of foolscap in most villainous handwriting. The task of deciphering the hieroglyphics was more

than I dared attempt, and I was obliged to send for Higgins to interpret. I then discovered that a portion (about ten lines) was transcribed from Lambard's "Perambulation of Kent." The remainder was a little impromptu composition—a hymn suitable for the use of young people at missionary gatherings. So for the collection of material I am indebted to other agencies and methods.

Meanwhile, he has been remaining quiet, lurking in ambush, reserving to a fitting opportunity the execution of his fell purpose, now revealed in his Epilogue. He has counted on the last word. In this plan he is foiled, for after the Epilogue comes the author's speech. I am going to anticipate, gentle reader, the call before the curtain.

Higgins lies at the mercy of the comrade whom he has so treacherously exposed. How shall I avenge myself? Shall I relate some of his amours. This would be vain, for the envenomed dart of the god has not yet discovered any vital spot. Can I traduce his uncles? No! These apocryphal worthies lie, their labours o'er, drowned in the depths of St. Eustace's Well. From their eternal slumber it were cruel to wake them. Let them rest in peace! My vengeance must be direct and summary, and shall descend straight upon the devoted head of the offender himself.

Higgins complains that I have been hard on him—that I have exaggerated his little shortcomings into serious faults. On the contrary, I maintain that I

have dealt with him hitherto so kindly and charitably, that those who know him will scarcely recognise the Higgins of real life in the comparatively sane and well-conducted character that appears in the Pilgrimage. He especially complains that I have ascribed to him a voracity of undue proportions. As a matter of fact this is the special deadly sin of Higgins that I most carefully endeavoured to tone down and keep in the background.

Just one instance out of many may be related to prove the truth of this contention. The other day Higgins came to me and said :—

“ I’ve got a splendid thing in hand that I want you to join me in. Down in the East-end I have discovered the existence of a vault under an old chapel, where centuries ago they used to bury thousands upon thousands of Greeks and Moors. Suppose we arrange some night to explore it ! ”

Higgins had acquired all the necessary particulars from oldest inhabitants, sextons, gas men, and the like. There certainly was a vault, and a way down to it, if his information was correct. As an archaeological discovery it would be most interesting to verify. Besides, these Eastern people are always buried with a lot of jewellery, gold, and precious stones. At last, there was a real opportunity presenting itself to amass wealth and escape from the cruel drudgery of earning one’s daily bread in tears and sighing. Can you wonder that I eagerly consented to join in the exploration ?

The pale rays of a December moon at midnight shone their silver beams on an old building within a court, reminding one of a Flemish Beguinage, and on two individuals carefully disguised, who, accompanied by a Hebrew concierge (bribed for the occasion), stealthily inserted the key into the ancient lock and disappeared into the interior. All was dark and silent within, save for the creaking of our footsteps on the rotten wooden floor. We walked on tip-toe, but the starting boards woke ghostly echoes.

"St-t-top," whispered Higgins, his teeth chattering with fright. "What's that?"

Through the darkness one gleam of light shone on the figure of a Bishop, whose hand seemed uplifted to warn off the intruders. We stopped. I seemed to recollect somehow that I ought to have been elsewhere on that particular evening.

"Bah! Dot vos only a light shining on the vinder glass."

Our guide then showed, by placing himself between the window and the white pillar, that the rays of a street lamp, shining on the stained glass, had created the apparition that was giving Higgins such a scare.

"Well, let's get to business," cried Higgins. "Here's where the trap-door ought to be. You take one crowbar, I'll take the other."

Working with a good will we soon loosened the square of flooring, to be again startled by the pattering of many feet all around the building.

“Bah, only rats,” said our janitor, contemptuously.

The removal of the flooring revealed a ring in the stonework beneath. With much exertion on the part of all three we raised the cover and found a well-like opening, about eighteen inches wide. Then the question was who should descend first. I offered to waive my claim in favour of the originator of the expedition. He said the guide was the proper person to lead the way ; but he was too fat !

In a weak moment I agreed to toss for the contested point with Higgins ; of course I lost. Lowering the lantern, I found myself in a low-arched passage dripping with moisture and slime, about four feet high, and of the same width. Higgins followed. A misgiving had seized him. Suppose the guide was to take advantage of our absence to replace the stone cover and entomb us alive, in the hope of a heavy ransom ! So I kindly offered to go home forthwith and inform Higgins’ relations of his perilous position. Higgins implored me not to leave him alone in that terrible place. I tried to console him by reminding him that he was insured. Still he continued to grumble, until I threatened to go back and seal him up on my own account if he would not stick to business and proceed.

We followed the passage for some distance, about twenty yards, though it seemed like half a mile in the stooping attitude to which we were constrained. A fatal obstacle then intervened in the shape of a mass of oozy black earth, which filled the entire tunnel.

Our crowbars could not discover its thickness ; our labours were all in vain. We had to return disconsolate, having achieved nothing worth mentioning !

On our walk home, after compensating the guide, I tried to make Higgins understand what a serious lesson this ought to be to him. For, will it be believed, under the pretence of archæological discovery, this ghoul, this body-snatcher, this veritable *fin de siècle* Sweeney Todd, actually contemplated robbing whole rows of poor Syrian or Algerian skeletons of what few precious trinkets their relations had spared them. I shudder at the very idea. Still worse, he proposed to make an accessory of one who has always done his best to retain him in the paths of rectitude !

And must I reveal the true reason that induced Higgins to join the Pilgrimage ?

[No, you must not ! The Publisher again intervenes. If the Reviewer is ambitious to squander his share of profits in libel actions, he is welcome to do so—through any channel he prefers excepting only these pages.]

THE PHOTOGRAPHER ARBITRATES.

Why is it that these two fellows are always at loggerheads ! They are exactly agreed on every question of theology, politics, and social economy. They love each other like brothers, and are miserable apart. And yet the whole journey from Holborn

Viaduct to Canterbury is principally memorable for their constant disputes and wrangles. I forget how many times we had to hold them apart to prevent them from killing each other. Can any one tell me, wherefore is this thusness? The only cause of difference I can imagine is that, whereas they are both determined and wilful, Higgins changes his mind once in every twenty minutes, and the Reviewer sticks to the same idea for upwards of a week.

The Boy is anxious that I should record the fact that he is not coming on any more pilgrimages. At dominoes there was always a combination against him, and the only game of whist was played in the train, and nearly ended in a disaster.

II.

THE TOMBS OF CATIGERN AND HORSA.

Among the older class of antiquaries the accepted view with regard to Kit's Coty House is that maintained by Lambard, Stow, and Camden, viz., that it is a monument to the British hero Catigern. The great difficulty in connection with this view is that, although the Britons are supposed to have been the victors in the battle of Aylesford, their opponents afterwards occupied the field of battle, and certainly would not have permitted such a work to have been erected. Bede and others make mention of a notable memorial being erected to Horsa.

It is true that there is at Horsted an assemblage of stones, which has certainly never been seen by any of the writers who have been satisfied with believing any tradition that this is the monument of Horsa. But there is nothing about it to suggest either a sepulchre or a memorial of any kind. It is only a heap on the side of a hill, not forming a mound. Nor is it possible to suppose that an invading army of freebooters could spare the time or have the infi-

nite perseverance to ransack the neighbourhood for parcels of small stones. This monument is evidently the natural outcome of centuries of husbandry. The stones were picked off the fields as they impeded the plough, and carted to a place where they were out of the way.

Colebrooke is the principal supporter of the theory that Kit's Coty House is the missing monument to Horsa. For his authorities I must refer the reader to vol. ii. of the "Archæologia." The tomb of Catigern he places at Addington, the nearest place fortified by the Britons, and, therefore, the most probable point to which they would retreat. But this latter supposition is pure conjecture. Wherever the two heroes were buried there must have been a certain amount of reprehensible carelessness in duly marking the spot. For to each of them is ascribed at least three distinct graves, the finest and best-preserved tumulus being open to claim by either. All kinds of theories are equally plausible. Maybe the lower tumulus was intended in honour of Catigern, and was abused and overturned by the victorious Saxons. But then the adjacent fields are rich in British sepulchral remains, which in all probability belong to a period much more remote than the battle of Aylesford.

Stow and Camden both declare, as a matter of course, that "Kit's Coty House" is corruptly called for Catigern's monument. Mr. Colebrooke, on the contrary, apprehends that the nickname might have

been acquired from some old shepherd who resorted to the place for shelter. Mr. Kains-Jackson connects "Coty" with the Celtic Stone, or "King Arthur's Quoit," in Glamorganshire. Yet another bolder thinker, Mr. W. Boys, suggests ("Archæologia," xi.) that the original name was *Kid-Cautey-Horsa*. "The place of contention between Cautey and Horsa."

Catigern and Horsa were not exactly friends in life, but it is just possible that in death they were not divided. The circles at Addington, the flint heap at Horsted, and the large stones mentioned by Hasted, fade away in interest before the romantic suggestion that the two opposing armies really *did* combine to erect a worthy and imperishable monument to the valour of their respective champions.

III.

OFFERINGS TO ST. BARTHOLOMEW AT OTFORD.

“It was long since fancied,” says Lambard, “and is yet of too many believed, that while Thomas Becket lay at the olde house at Otford, (which of long time belonged to the Archbishops, and whereof the hall and Chapell only do now remaine,) and sawe that it wanted a fit spring to water it, that he strake his staffe into the drye ground, in a place thereof now called *St. Thomas’ Well*, and that immediately water appeared, the whiche running plentifully, serveth the offices of the new house till this present day. They say also that, as he walked on a time in the olde Parke, busie at his prayers, that he was muche hindered in devotion by the sweete note and melodie of a nightingale that sang in a bush beside him, and that therefore (in the myght of his holynesse) he enjoined that from henceforth no byrde of that kynde should be so bolde as to sing thereaboutes. Some men report likewise, that as much as a smithe then dwelling in the towne, had cloyed his horse, he enacted by

like authority, that after that time no smith should thrive within the parishe."

But "Beside this Thomas, there was holden in great veneration at Otford, another saint, called Bartilmew the Apostle, as I trowe, for his feast daye was kept solemne both with a fayre, and good fare there. This man served the person [parson] as purveyour of his poultrie, and was frequented by ye parishioners and neighbours about for a most rare and singular propertie he possessed ; for ye manner was, yf any woman, conceived with child, desired to bring forth a male, she should offer to Saint Bartholomewe a cocke chicken ; and if her wishe were to be delivered of a female, she should present him with a hen. Assuredly through the fraude of this foxe, the country people (as wise as capons) were many years together robbed of their hennes and cockes : till at the length it chaunced King Henry the Eight, after exchange made with the Archebishop for this Manor of Otford to have conference with some of the towne about the enlarging of his parke there ; amongst the which one called Maister Robert Multon, (a man whom for the honest memorie of his godly zeal and vertuous life I sticke not to name,) detesting the abuse, and espying the Prince inclined to heare, unfolded unto him the whole packe of the idolatrie, and prevailed so farre in favor that shortly after, the King commanded St. Bartholomewe to be taken downe and deliverede him."

The connection of this practice with St. Bartholomew may be presumed to be accidental. In all probability the custom dates from a period long anterior to the time when the church received its dedication in honour of the famous relic of St. Bartholomew at Canterbury.

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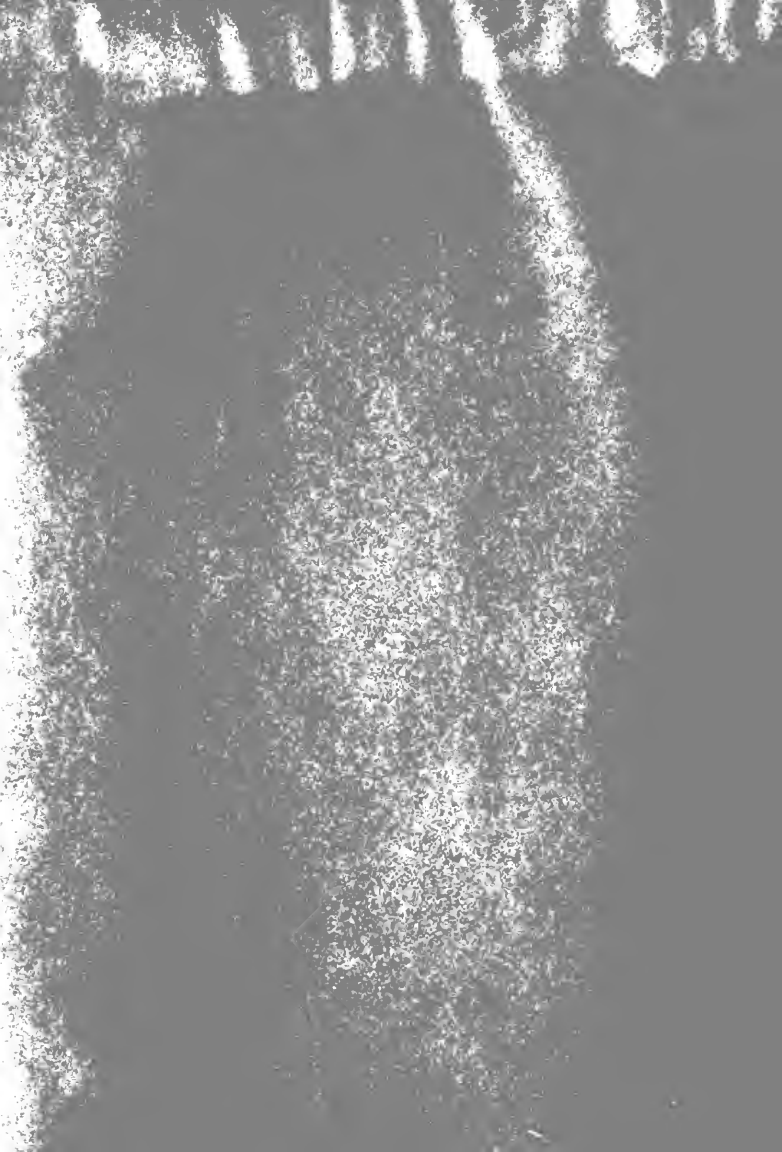
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